

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mervin Richards, 65, retired Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard worker

"Well, there used to be election meetings I remember at the little park next to the Moana Hotel where they get Hawaiian music and then the different candidates got up to speak. Everybody would like to go there because we get Hawaiian music--hula dancing which they don't have today."

Mervin Richards, part-Hawaiian, was born on December 30, 1920, in Honolulu, O'ahu. His mother, Georgiana Agnes Lokelani Williams Richards, was a hula teacher. His father, Manuel Keomakalani Richards, was a taxi/tour driver who together with his wife operated an early commercial luau business at their home in Waikiki.

Mervin Richards resided in Waikiki for over fifty years. He played in the Hamohamo Road neighborhood and attended St. Louis School, graduating in 1939. From 1940 to December, 1979, he worked at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Richards and his family now live in St. Louis Heights. He is an avid fan of the U.H. Rainbow baseball team.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mervin Richards (MR)

March 7, 1985

St. Louis Heights, O'ahu

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Mervin Richards at his home in St. Louis Heights, Honolulu, Hawai'i, on March 7, 1985. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Richards, the first question I have for you is, "What was your mother's full maiden name?"

MR: Georgiana Agnes Lokelani Williams.

MK: What can you tell me about your mother's family background?

MR: Well, chee, not too much. All I would know is my daughter had taken a family history. . . . What you call it now? I asked her to bring the paper, but she wants to contact one of my cousins in that respect. All I know, their background, her family was the Williams, and the family in Ka'a'awa which is the Padekens.

My mother had three sisters, I think, all deceased, and two brothers. They also deceased. Every one of them, even my mother, is deceased. I think that's about all I can think of right now unless I have that paper from my daughter which [is] the genealogy list. You could have it if you want it. If I get it back, you can go through it.

MK: What would you know about your mother's parents? Your grandparents on the Williams side?

MR: Only one that I could remember is my grandmother. She used to stay down on Weaver Lane off Beretania Street, which is the Board of Water Supply now.

My grandfather, I understood, was a seaman. I guess, you know their life of having a few. . . . Well, he got in a tiff with somebody and then fell down and hit his head and died.

(Interview stops, then resumes.)

MR: And my grandmother was living on Weaver Lane where I used to go

quite a bit. When she died, she was buried at the old King Street Catholic graveyard. There have been no burials there for many years. Of course, we have plenty room in the plot, but couldn't do anything about it.

MK: What was your father's full name?

MR: I understood my father's real name was Manuel Keomakalani Richards. I know him as Richards. But they tell me later that his former name was Ricardo. They changed it. I don't know about the change. All I know my dad as Manuel K. Richards.

MK: What did you know about your father's family background?

MR: Well, all I know [is] that they were brought up at Richard Lane in Kalihi. I used to go there when I was small boy with my father's mother. She had a big home there where Mike and "Honey" Richards were living, also.

Then when they had the big flood in Kalihi, I forgot what year it was, my grandmother's house was washed onto King Street. So, evidently, they couldn't get it back on ma uka side where it originally was, so they just pushed it across the street and set the foundation up again. The house stayed there until I don't know, later.

See, after my father died in 1939, I didn't have much communications with the Kalihi gang, but my father's oldest brother, family, was living Kaimuki. So I got to know most of them, which is Valentine Richards--he's the former manager of Pāwa'a Theatre. My cousin Ruby, and Mary DeRamos. Her sons were all football players at St. Louis. Ruby's daughter is a nun at Sacred Hearts Academy. Her last name was Woods. Another [family member], Herman, is now at the old folks [home], Lunalilo [Home]. That's about all.

MK: In terms of your own ethnic background, what are you?

MR: Well, according to my birth certificate, I'm Portuguese-Hawaiian. But my mother supposedly had German. Because if you saw my mother's picture, and my uncle and them, you can see that they really catered to the Caucasian side. So I guess my birth certificate is registered as part-Hawaiian and I go as Portuguese-Hawaiian.

MK: And then, when were you born?

MR: I was born December 30, 1920, at Kapi'olani Hospital, which is now the Foodland grocery store on Beretania Street (across from the main police station). It was in a lane there.

MK: And how many brothers and sisters do you have?

MR: One sister. I have only one sister--Mrs. Lokelani Silva.

MK: Are you the older one or younger?

MR: I am the oldest. She's six years younger than I.

MK: Where did the family live before the family moved to Waikīkī?

MR: I guess, first two years we lived in Pāwa'a Lane. That would be in the McCully area across from where the Times [Super] Market is, around that area right now (near Central Union Church).

When I was two years old, we moved to Waikīkī. On Lemon Road, one of my uncles, my father had rented a place from him, Mr. Williams. I guess when I was four, my father then had an opportunity to buy a house and lot in Waikīkī which was subdivided for Hawaiian people by Mr. (Harold) Castle(, Sr.).

MK: How much did your family pay for that house and lot?

MR: To my understanding, they paid \$2,500 for the house and lot. You paid according to your means. There was no time limit. I mean, he gave them all the break he can to buy the home.

MK: What size was that lot?

MR: Fifty by 100--5,000 square feet.

MK: You said that, that house and lot was on Hamohamo Road. Whereabouts on Hamohamo Road?

MR: It was the second---actually, the first house facing Hamohamo from Paoakalani [Avenue] on the ma uka side. The corner house that was there, its address was on Paoakalani [Avenue].

MK: I was wondering, why did your family choose that particular lot?

MR: Well, I don't know if it was chosen for, but I guess it's because my father was driving taxi. I mean, we call it "taxi" but actually it was people [i.e., tourists] that he took care of that went back [to the Mainland] and passed his name on to other people. They came and he took care their whole party. Met them at the boat, wherever, and took them to the hotel. Took care of the party they came with as long as they were here.

And also, my mom and dad used to have luaus. I guess you'd call it commercial luaus now, but they were at our home in the backyard [where] we had erected a--we called it a "hula house," [which] was just a big hall.

The cooking all was prepared under our own home. There was no pig involved. There was just laulau but all the other ingredients were there.

MK: When you look back to your small kid days when you were elementary school, intermediate school days, try describe for me what your house and lot looked like on Hamohamo Road. What did that house

look like?

MR: Well, we call it three bedroom. Actually, was two bedrooms. The back room was the sewing room. See, my mother was a seamstress in her younger days. She did lot of sewing. Later on, we used it for a bedroom, but I think it was more of a sewing room.

We had lot of beautiful laua'e baskets bordering the house outside. Also, we had a lot of baskets that was put into the hula house, we called it, when we had parties. There's a one-car garage. We had roses hedges in front. This tree over there. . . . I can't think of the name of the tree right here, but was a lot of foliage around the house.

MK: You know, that hula house that you mentioned, how big was that hula house?

MR: I would say about twenty by forty. Maybe it might be twenty by thirty because it went up to our garage.

MK: In those days, what kind of appliances did your family have in the house?

MR: Was all gas. We had gas stove. In fact, all the cooking downstairs was on flat gas stoves. The lauaus were steamed in a big-- we call it a "bell," anyway today. But was all steamed lauaus.

We had our small little gas heater upstairs. That was only for bathing purposes, for hot water. Small little gas heater. That's about only, all the rest was cold water, and refrigerator.

In fact, the first icebox, I remember we had, before we had the refrigerator, we had to go get ice. My dad had to buy ice, you know. That's only way you could chill the icebox by block of ice until the first chance he had, he bought a refrigerator.

MK: That block of ice, where did your dad get it from?

MR: O'ahu Ice which used to be on the corner of Cooke [Street] and Kapi'olani Boulevard. Now, it's no more. Used to be, the last was Primo Brewery.

MK: That ice company, would it deliver to your house?

MR: Well, they get an iceman used to come around with an ice truck. They deliver. They come in and they wrap 'em in newspaper. Was to keep the ice from dissolving, you know.

MK: So you had a big house with the hula house in the back, yard with foliage, yeah? And then, when you looked outside from your house, in general, what did the other houses in the neighborhood look like?

MR: Oh, beautiful. They had coconut trees. Of course, my house had a mountain apple tree, mango trees galore, coconut trees and breadfruit trees. Lot of breadfruit.

In fact, we used to get the breadfruit off and my mother used to bake it for us to eat. Now days, hard to find breadfruit trees. In fact, nearly every yard had a breadfruit tree.

Lot of mango trees, the common mango, which is hard to find today.

MK: So you had all these fruit trees in the neighborhood. So what kind of sharing occurred?

MR: Oh, you go and if you ask permission, they allow you to pick. We just took what we needed. We didn't remove every fruit. What you needed to eat, you took. 'Cause you was always welcome to come back.

Dates, we had dates. There was a lot of date trees down the zoo. I don't know what kind of dates you call 'em, but lot of big dates. Different varieties they had at the zoo.

MK: So quite a bit to eat, yeah?

MR: Oh, yeah. That's why we even used to go down to 'Āinahau. They called it 'Āinahau. All kind mango trees. You had Chinese mango. You had cigar mango. You just ask the old folks. They allow you to go pick what you wish, but not overdo, you know. Make sure you clean up the rubbish.

(Laughter)

MK: Sounds like kinda good fun times for you.

MR: Oh, yeah!

MK: And how about the houses in the neighborhood? What did they look like? The houses?

MR: They were pretty well built. There was no high two-story homes. They were all low. And all about the looks of our home.

MK: Starting with your block, where you lived on Hamohamo [Road], Paoakalani [Avenue] and Kāneloa [Road], tell me who your neighbors were and anything that stands out in your mind about your neighbors.

MR: Well, on Hamohamo [Road], on the ma uka side, we would be the first house on the ma uka side as you came into Hamohamo [Road] from Paoakalani [Avenue]. Next door was a Hawaiian family which I wouldn't know the name. They finally sold it to the Yamashiges.

Next to that was the old Waikīkī [Elementary] School. This is going towards Diamond Head now. Waikīkī [Elementary] School, then

you had the George Padeken family, which is some relation to my mother--my mother's side from Ka'a'awa. Then next to George Padeken was, well, I forget the name of the people, some Portuguese family. Then the corner, which is Makee [Road].

Going up Makee [Road] to Kāneloa [Road], there was a big empty lot, I think. Now it's a big condo there. Was an old home there. The Bungo family used to stay in the old home there in the corner. Big empty lot.

You came past that, was Waikīkī Elementary School again. This is coming 'Ewa on Kāneloa [Road].

After you past Waikīkī [Elementary] School, you got to the Laus' home. Then the Kaeo family. Sonny Kaeo was a former football player at the University of Hawai'i on the "Wonder Team."

Next to that was the Keakahi family. That would be on the corner of Kāneloa [Road] and Paoakalani [Avenue].

Now coming towards the ocean, would be the Bishaws. I forget their first names. The Punohu family. Then the Kaukele family. Then finally, the Joy family moved there.

MK: And then, now, if we go to the next block down ma kai, you have Hamohamo [Road], Paoakalani [Avenue] and Cartwright [Road]. Who lived in that block?

MR: Well, on the ma kai side of Hamohamo [Road] going towards Diamond Head would be the Parkers, right on the corner. They took care of both corners. Their lot ran on both corners--Paoakalani [Avenue] and Hamohamo [Road].

Then the next house, before the Kaawakauos moved there, the Ahakuelo family used to stay there. Then I don't know, they moved to Pālama. Then the Kaawakauo family moved in. Mrs. Emma Kaawakauo, she was also a schoolteacher at Waikīkī [Elementary] School.

MK: And that Ahakuelo family that you mentioned, was there any relationship to the one [i.e., Ben Ahakuelo] involved in the Massie case?

MR: Benny's mother and father.

MK: Oh, okay.

MR: Then I guess they moved to Pālama. He became one of the best welter-weight fighters in the Islands. But because of the Massie case, they wouldn't allow him to travel to the Mainland to fight. All the other champs went, but he was stuck here.

MK: So you had his family. They moved out. And you had the . . .

MR: Kaawakauos moved in. Then the next door to that was the person

that I mentioned before, was Mr. [John] Williams--that was his home. That's my mother's cousin.

Then next door to that, going Diamond Head was Ewaliko. They had courts and an old home. So they had a big, good piece of property there.

MK: What do you mean by "courts"? They had "courts"?

MR: I mean, what you call duplex apartments. They had duplex apartments and an old home in the center, and then his home. They were all rented out. Next door, I can remember--maybe they were owned by Hawaiians before--but were all Japanese families that did laundry for people who came, drop and pick up laundry. That was one of the big things in Waikīkī--the laundry ladies. I guess they catered to all the big people that don't want to do laundry. They did the laundry and everything for them.

Then next door to that was the Jackson [i.e., Esther Jackson Bader] family. See, finally, [Esther Jackson Bader] coordinated her property with the Ornelles'. They get the big condo [Crescent Park] there now. On the corner was an empty lot. I don't know who owned that.

So that takes care of Paoakalani [Avenue] up to Makee Road.

MK: Then as you go down Makee Road . . .

MR: Was the Ornelles family. Rasmussen coming in.

MK: On Cartwright [Road]. Now, who was on the Cartwright [Road] side of that . . .

MR: Chee, I forget now. Was couple of old homes. I forget who the people now. But there was the Spencer family about mid-block. See next door to the Ornelles' was a home, then an empty lot, then the Spencer family. Then next to the Spencer family was some more Japanese families that did washing. The husbands were working probably at the hotel, and the wives did the washing, pick up kind.

Next to that was this. . . . I forget the name that you gave me.

MK: De Rego?

MR: No, no.

MK: Matsuzawa?

MR: Matsuzawa. Their grandfather, I guess, used to take his cart and go all the way to the end of the (street)car line at Kapi'olani Park and sell saimin.

MK: What did that cart look like?

MR: It was something like a rickshaw with two big wheels and all these cooking utensils in the back. He pulled it either forward or reverse.

MK: What did he sell?

MR: Saimin. Barbecue meat, whatever. He used to go right [to] the end of the [street]car line which is Poni Mō'i [Avenue] now. Poni Mō'i and Lē'ahi [Avenues] where they all meet with Kalākaua Avenue.

MK: And who were the people that would buy and eat his foods?

MR: Most of the local people, they knew that, that was the pattern. Always, especially go out and have saimin at night.

MK: Did you ever have his saimin?

MR: No, no. I never did, because we weren't allowed to go far at night, see. In fact, there was a curfew. Eight o'clock you gotta be at home. You didn't wander too far away. When the siren blew, you were off the streets. All the minors gotta be off the streets, otherwise you get pick up by the police.

MK: You just mentioned police right now. How frequently did the police come around your neighborhood?

MR: Well, in my teen days, they started this patrol, police patrol. Well, they patrol the area but I don't know how. . . . As I say, during the day, I didn't see much of 'em. Rarely saw 'em.

MK: Anyway, going back to that block. Who were the people next to the Matsuzawas?

MR: Was the De Regos. He was the janitor at the Waikīkī [Elementary] School.

MK: Oh. When you were a small kid?

MR: Yeah, yeah. He was the janitor. He was a custodian, rather, for the school.

MK: What do you remember about him since you used to see him around the school?

MR: Oh, always, he was strict. He didn't want us to play. See, them days, the public schools used to have competition in gardening. The best flower bed. Mrs. King was the principal, and they always had beautiful pansy beds of flowers that they hated us to play in there and mess it up. So he was quite concerned about us playing football in the [schoolyard] which we did regardless. When he came, we took off.

(Laughter)

MR: But he was a nice fellow.

MK: And then, who lived next to the De Regos as you went up ma uka Paoakalani [Avenue]?

MR: Well, I don't know. That's the family, they had a clothes cleaning shop up Kalākaua which was Kūhiō Cleaners. That's the family that owned Kūhiō Cleaners.

MK: Okay. Would that be the Harakawas?

MR: Yeah! Dick Harakawa. I know he and the brother well. Actually, I know him more than the brother. I think the brother's name was Haruo, I think.

MK: And next to the Harakawas?

MR: Ah, see, the Purdy family. Their sons went to Roosevelt [High] School I think. I don't know too much about the. . . . Then next door was the Parker family.

MK: And then, I've been told that in the Parker family there was a sister who was a teacher.

MR: Yeah. Her name--we called her "Pio" but she's Mrs. Hayselden. She taught, I guess, for many years on Hawai'i. Because she married Mr. Hayselden who come from Waimea. I don't know what school she taught. I know they were living in Pa'auilo on the Big Island, and they finally moved here because he was with the Standard Oil Company.

The mother and father had a big home there. About six bedrooms, with all the children they had. She had one, two--two brothers. One sister. I don't know. But anyway, they had a big six-bedroom home there. They had renovated from a small house. They went up higher.

MK: Oh, so that house kinda stood out in the neighborhood.

MR: Yeah. Right on the corner.

MK: And then, now as we move down one more block ma kai, the Cartwright [Road], Paoakalani [Avenue] and Lemon [Road] block, who lived on that block?

MR: On the corner was the Akaka family. I think the son is still living. He's on Maui. He married an Akana girl. The sisters, he had two sisters. I think they both were schoolteachers, the sisters. The father used to work for the City and County. I don't know what was his capacity. Anyway, for the local government.

MK: And then next door, on Cartwright [Road]?

MR: Would be the DeFries family. They had quite a big area there. I don't really know what happened to the property. In fact, they

went almost mid-block from the Akakas to where they had a big piece of property there.

MK: And next to them?

MR: Was another Japanese people. I forget their names. Then next to them was the Nadamoto family, Ichiro and Isao. [Ichiro] Nadamoto, he's with the football team for injuries. He takes care. The last I know, he was with 'Iolani School. I don't know if he is still there. And I understand his son does the same as he. Something like a chiropractor, I think. I don't know. Probably. [Dr. Ichiro Nadamoto is an orthopedic surgeon.]

Next to that, there were cottages. I don't know who owned those cottages. That would take you up to Makee Road.

Going down Makee Road, chee, I really wouldn't know too many, but only I know on Lemon Road would be the Sasakis, "Dixie." We call him "Dixie." His father had a place there. He married. He was a police officer. He retired as a police officer. That's their place.

Two other homes. All Japanese families. I don't know who really the original owners were. But I can't think of their names. And you came almost to the corner there, where you have the Williams homes that we first stayed when we went to Waikīkī and the Manu family on the corner.

MK: And when you folks first stayed on Lemon Road, what was the relationship between your family and the Williams family over there on Lemon Road?

MR: Oh, that was my mother's cousin, John Williams.

MK: So that first home was more of a renting situation?

MR: It was, yeah. To make it more convenient for my dad in his line of work in Waikīkī.

MK: Then when you go to the next block, where you have Lemon [Road], Paoakalani and Kalākaua [Avenues], what was the . . .

MR: Well, on the top corner here, Paoakalani [Avenue] and Lemon [Road], was Joe Bishaw. He was one of the top musicians in his days. Guitarist, singer. Joe Bishaw.

MK: Where did he play?

MR: He played at some of my dad's luaus. He belonged to the. . . . Oh, can't think of that name. I have a picture of that group that [he] sang with--all-men group. There's about four of them. Kamakau Trio, they call 'em.

Next to him would be the Mays. I only know them as the Mays. They were relatives to Mr. Bishaw. After that, see, I can't recall those people. Then you went down the corner. I don't know if that's the same with the May Sasaki, where the hotel is today now. The one in the middle.

MK: Oh. Gee, I don't know the name.

MR: You get the one on the corner here. The one here in the middle. Oh, shee.

MK: So, let's see, you have Joe Bishaw on the corner of Lemon [Road] and Paoakalani [Avenue].

MR: The Mays next door.

MK: The Mays next door. And then . . .

MR: Going down Paoakalani [Avenue] was the Lemon Estate, we call 'em. That was where the [Lalani] Hawaiian Village was later. There's a big hotel there now. It's a branch of the one at the airport, on the corner there coming out.

MK: Oh, the Holiday Inn.

MR: Holiday Inn. Yeah.

MK: You know that Hawaiian Village, or the Lalani Hawaiian Village run by the Mossman family . . .

MR: They used to have luaus and regular entertainment. They were in the---well, sort of similar with my dad used to make [i.e., commercial luaus]. But when they started, my dad was already kinda swaying off already.

MK: And what else do you know about that [Lalani] Hawaiian Village? I know your sister went there [for hula lessons].

MR: Oh, my sister graduated at the [Lalani] Hawaiian Village. Their 'ūniki [for hula]. Four of them graduated. She, the Kaawakauo girl, Kaeo girl but there's another. I have the picture, but I can't think of the girl's name right now.

MK: And who would be instructing the girls that came to the [Lalani] Hawaiian Village?

MR: I think Mrs. Mossman and her husband. They had two daughters that were good. One was Pi'ilani. I don't know what happened to her. Pi'ilani, and Leilani, she's now Mrs. Su. That's the youngest. They were all hula dancers in their teens.

MK: What other things did they teach or show at the [Lalani] Hawaiian Village?

MR: I guess, they used to have hula classes, I don't know, for the Mainland tourists. But I never did go to any of the functions that they had there.

MK: So, let's see, if you cross Paoakalani [Avenue] on Kalākaua [Avenue], what was there then when you were a small kid?

MR: That's all beach. All. In fact, the water came up to the wall. All rocks. We used to go there and pick pipipi. We'd just dig 'em out with a safety pin and eat 'em. And 'alamihī crab, black crab.

There was a little beach which kinda jetted out. Wasn't too big but it was right after if you were to go across from the Makee Road on Kalākaua [Avenue].

See, one day we were surfing and finally we heard somebody mention that there was a whale stuck on the reef. So, we were all kinda inquisitive. We went over there, but we couldn't. . . . But Mr. George Padeken, somehow or other, he got a tie on the whale's tail. We drug it, oh, about 100 yards from where it was stuck on the reef to that small little beach I mentioned about.

And I pity it. When they got there everybody was there for souvenir and was just slaughtered up. So, Hawaiian Dredging [and Construction Company] had to come and pick it up and dispose of the carcass.

MK: And that small beach area that you mentioned, was that also the area where you played football?

MR: No, no. Further down, fronting the Dean's Restaurant [Dean's By-the-Sea]. Certain part of the year when the sand comes in. See, when I was small there was no, what you call, they have now. It was all reef. So certain part of the year, all the sand came in. And there was water about a foot deep. All sand. We used to go out there play football and whatever and run almost halfway out to the surf, the big surf. What we call "Small Surf" was where the sand area was.

MK: And that was tackle football or touch football?

MR: Touch football.

MK: So you used to play over there on the beachy areas. Now if you were on Kalākaua [Avenue], I've been told there are all kinds of small businesses on Kalākaua [Avenue], where you have Paoakalani, Kalākaua, and 'Ōhua [Avenues], yeah. That block.

MR: Well, on the corner of Paoakalani and Kalākaua [Avenues], on 'Ewa side, was the first Aoki Store. Then next was Kapi'olani Cleaners. After Kapi'olani Cleaners, I forget what it was, but anyway there was a taxi stand and a Chinese laundry.

This guy had all Chinese doing his laundry here. They stayed in a rooming house just off 'Ōhua [Avenue]. 'Cause we used to go there

to watch them smoke opium. We used to get a kick watching them. You know, how they puff with the opium, eh? All old, elderly Chinese men. But they used to work for the laundry. And he did all his laundry delivering by horse and buggy, cart and horse. That was his means of transportation. We used to call him, "Pākē John."

Next to him was Kuni Taxi. I can remember but I don't know who, actually, you know, the name Kuni. Next to that used to be a stream. Then on the 'Ewa side of the stream was--we call him Tahara but finally end up as a name of Unique [Cafe]. Pipi kaula. We used to go there for pipi kaula. Fifteen cents--pipi kaula and poi.

(Laughter)

MK: Was it really 'ono?

MR: Yeah. Instead of going home which I only lived a few blocks up, you get fifteen cents you can eat pipi kaula, poi, stay down the beach. Because when came summer, we practically lived on the beach. We very seldom went home. We'd go get limu in the water and then go eat pipi kaula, poi.

And limu, well, forget the name now. Well, they had all kind of limu. Limu-'ele'ele which was by the queen's home on the wall. We used to go down there get the red limu. Limu līpoa which is common. We used to go get that. Clean 'em, and have 'em with our pipi kaula, poi. Was filling.

MK: I heard he [Tahara at Unique Cafe] made good banana pies, too.

MR: Very good. Actually, he and there was an old Haole gentleman. I forget where he came from but anyway, that guy taught the old man how to bake those banana pies, which everybody loved.

MK: What kinds of people used to go to this Unique Cafe?

MR: Most of the local people. Because he wasn't too big. Only about two, three tables.

MK: And then who was next to Tahara's Unique Cafe?

MR: Well, I can't really recall but Ibaraki Store used to be the middle block between there and 'Ōhua [Avenue]. See when Aoki moved to . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MR: When Aoki [Store] moved to the corner of Kalākaua and 'Ōhua [Avenues], they built a new building there. Ibaraki [Store], which was about midway between the stream and Aoki [Store], moved to Paoakalani [Avenue]

corner. Then there where their store was, was a little, some kind of a restaurant. Whoever bought that restaurant finally built another restaurant on the corner there which is. . . . I forget what it is now.

MK: Would that be the Blue Ocean Inn?

MR: Blue Ocean Inn, yeah. Japanese people used to own 'em. Then next to Aoki was a little store there. I forget the name.

MK: What kinds of things did Ibaraki [Store] and Aoki Store sell?

MR: Regular things you would buy for home consumption. Fruits and meats. See, Aoki used to take care for all the food for Doris Duke Cromwell. She had one Portuguese guy that did the shopping over there. And they deliver to the Cromwells. Maybe they did to some others, the big families in Waikīkī, I wouldn't know. But I know that this Portuguese guy used to come over there, make the order, and Aoki deliver to Cromwells' residence which was up Kāhala. Kāhala-wai, eh?

MK: And then, when you go up the block, up 'Ōhua [Avenue] . . .

MR: Up the block, the first house here was another Japanese family which did laundry work. Couple more here. Then that little alley I was talking to you about, in the back where they had a two-story building where the Chinese workers lived.

Above that walkway, was homes which St. Augustine Church finally bought, where the original St. Augustine School was, prior to moving to Paoakalani [Avenue] and almost to Ala Wai [Boulevard].

Then next door to that was another old Japanese people. Was a court, about four or five homes, that did laundry work, too. But the sons used to work at the hotel. Like I say, most of these laundry women, their husbands at sometime or other worked at the hotels.

MK: Like what hotels did they work at?

MR: Well, Moana [Hotel], the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel], Halekūlani [Hotel]. See, Moana [Hotel] and Halekūlani, one of the older.

MK: What kinds of work did these Japanese men do?

MR: Mostly bellhops and da kine. Many years later, lot of these boys became bartenders and stuff.

MK: And then, say, beyond that Japanese camp, you go up more ma uka, what was there on Paoakalani [Avenue]?

MR: On Paoakalani [Avenue], back of the camp, Aoki Store, you going up Paoakalani [Avenue], eh? Back of the store used to be all coral, empty lot, coral. The Japanese old folks used to have their bon odori

dances over there in the back of there. Bon odori, or what. We used to go because dance over there.

MK: Oh? How did they do that? What did they set up over there?

MR: Something similar to what they have now. They have the stand where the singer go. Pound the drum, eh? Then they dance below, eh? With the lantern.

MK: What other things happened at that bon odori?

MR: Well, all they do, the Japanese man that used to stay next door to us, he was one of the featured singers over there. Yamashige. No, he wasn't a Yamashige. They were renting the home from Yamashiges. They were staying next door to us. I forget. The daughter finally moved out. They living up Kapahulu on Hayden Street.

MK: So small kid time, you used to go to the bon-odori?

MR: Yeah. We go bon-odori. When they get over there, we all know they going get. So we go.

MK: Did you participate, too?

MR: Well, we can go dancing but you gotta get kimono, eh? They give you kimono, you can go jump in.

MK: And then over there in the center in the back of the Aoki [Store] area, they had the bon dance. And then . . .

MR: Then it's big empty lot. Then again, we call 'em Japanese camp 'cause all the old. . . . They did laundry, too, see. Above that, had one Japanese[-language] school in Waikiki which is the one in Kapahulu now. That's Waikiki Japanese[-language] School. That's the original place. It's on the, I would say, Cartwright [Road] and Paoakalani [Avenue]. That corner.

Then above that, another empty lot. Then I think, the Kimokeo family, Hawaiian family. They used to, then bumbai another old Japanese people took over, did laundry work, too.

Then there was a walkway which was right across from Hamohamo [Road]. Then the Nakamura family stayed over there. Their sons was working at the hotel. Father, I guess. One of the brothers ended up as a bartender. In fact, two brothers ended up bartenders. At the Moana Hotel, I think it was.

MK: If you go across 'Ōhūa, what was on this side? The block 'Ewa of the old St. Augustine School. This is 'Ōhūa [Avenue] and this is Kalākaua [Avenue]. (MK points to map.)

MR: Oh, you mean 'Ewa side? Had a clothes cleaner, Yoshimura family. Then gas station, Sano. That's the people who own the house right

next to the Williams over here on Lemon Road, Sano family. Then there was another taxi stand over here.

MK: What was the name of the taxi stand?

MR: Chee, I forgot the name of the taxi stand. These guys, I think, ~~Walter~~ Monkawa would know because they lived right around in that area by the church. Across from the church. Then you go. Then the driveway go to the church, St. Augustine Church here. And above the church, oh, had homes all the way to the corner of 'Ōhūa and Paoakalani [Avenues]. See 'Ōhūa [Avenue] wasn't a through street. Never go all the way up. It went from past Hamohamo [Road]. I mean, not Hamohamo [Road].

MK: This is Hamohamo [Road]. (MK points to map.)

MR: I'm talking about Kūhiō [Avenue]. Go above, about, let's see, Kanekoas' home on the corner. Then the Japanese laundry people. Then the Hawaiian Church.

MK: This is all the ma uka area, yeah?

MR: Ma uka area, Diamond Head side. Then the road dead end. Then had some homes over here on the corner. Old homes. I don't know who the people were. Forget. Also below, up to the church, had homes. Lot of old homes.

MK: So there were old homes between, say, 'Ōhūa [Avenue] and Hamohamo [Road]. This area?

MR: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Then more homes above Hamohamo [Road].

MR: Yeah, mm hmm. Then later, they built. When they made the street through Hamohamo [Road], they changed Hamohamo [Road] to Kūhiō [Avenue] which went right from Paoakalani [Avenue] through to Kūhiō [Avenue].

MK: About when did they do that, change Hamohamo [Road] to Kūhiō [Avenue]?

MR: Chee. I really can't recall what year, though. But was quite some time because I remember it was quite a while before they did that. Over here on the corner of Kūhiō [Avenue] and. . . . You see, where apartments over here? Well, you know, they rent out. Had one big banyan tree over here, too.

One year we had this storm. The wind blew the banyan tree right over. Because the banyan tree wasn't--they never let the roots anchor. They cut all the outside roots off. This wind just lifted. Just lay the whole tree down.

- MK: So that would have been near what would have been Kūhiō and 'Ōhūa [Avenues] . . .
- MR: Just off 'Ōhūa [Avenue]. See, between there and here used to be empty lot. That's where I said the stream used to go down. Then you had the Kimokeo [family] and the laundry people I told you [about]. Above was the Nakamura family.
- MK: And then you mentioned that the Hawaiian Church that's ma uka on 'Ōhūa [Avenue] side? What kind of church was that?
- MR: Well, we used to go there because they had sports. We can play sports. But it was sponsored by Kawaiaha'o Church. Just like subsidiary of the main church.
- MK: What kinds of sports did they sponsor?
- MR: Had volleyball, basketball, inter-church things so you can play, eh? They let us play because, as long as you can play you go over there. They allow you to play. You don't have to belong to the church. Recreation for us, eh? 'Cause, actually, we never did have a park where we can, like today the kids can go and have their different activities, you know.
- In fact, I used to play baseball. We played baseball. I used to play baseball for Ibaraki's side. We challenged Kuni. Kuni had his own gang, eh? Tom Ibaraki them, he was the leader of his gang. I played for that gang. Baseball.
- MK: And who is this Kuni that you just mentioned?
- MR: That's the people that used to stay across from the old--where they said it was the queen's [i.e., Lili'uokalani's] home before on the Paoakalani [Avenue] and almost close to Ala Wai [Canal].
- MK: So that's the Kuni that's part of the Fujimoto family?
- MR: Yes. Fujimoto family. Had a brother. I don't know how many sisters. 'Cause I remember we used to go over there because they have tamarind tree. That's why when they mention Tamarind Park on Bishop Street, recall my days when we used to pick tamarind from their tree.
- It was about the only tamarind tree in Waikīkī. All the rest were opium [i.e., 'opiuma] tree. We call 'em "opium tree." They had a nice little fruit. Almost similar to tamarind, but tamarind was brown.
- MK: So you used to have little neighborhood teams then? Like you'd go play with . . .
- MR: That's about our only recreation was neighborhood teams or toss up, go play football down where the zoo is now. We used to play over there. That was only park we can go for. In later years, Thomas

Jefferson [Elementary School].

MK: Then you mentioned Ibarakis, Ibaraki Store. Who are some of the surviving children of the Ibaraki Store?

MR: Today, all I only know is three boys surviving. The older boy is Takeshi. Then you get Tom. I don't know what his Japanese name is. Then the third one, who we call 'em "Dippy," but I forget his Japanese name.

MK: I'm gonna change the subject, you know, right now to your mother and your father, okay? I was wondering, when you were small, what did your mother do for a living?

MR: Well, I was of the opinion, she told me that she used to do seamstress work. Where, I don't know. When she married my father, in his line of work, they worked up a deal where they started having luaus in our backyard in the hula house I said they built. He would pick up his fare, his group and whoever came, and work up a luau which my mother then would cater to.

MK: And who would be helping your mother?

MR: Her good friends--Mrs. Sakuma, stayed down on Weaver Lane; Mrs. Hoke which is about a block away from us. Lot of other friends of hers. Names I couldn't recall.

MK: And then what kinds of things would she have to get ready for the luaus that your family [catered] . . .

MR: Well, my father used to do--he always go down to Wing Hong I think, down on Kekaulike Market and buy all his fruits, pineapples. I don't know where he got his beef for the lauau but most of the ingredients were bought down on market on Kekaulike Street. Yeah. Below, the old market.

MK: So your mother would make the lauau and . . .

MR: Yeah, these people would help her prepare the lauaus, the salmon. I don't think they had salmon but they had lau'au. She used to make, and that I used to love was coconut milk with squid. With lau'au, squid, coconut milk mixed. That was one of the dishes, I remember. You hardly see that today, coconut milk with squid. You always see squid lau'au. But you don't hear about coconut milk ingredient in there. Then they used to make out of the coconut milk, make something like kulolo. The other Hawaiian name.

MK: Haupia.

MR: Haupia. But they never did make kulolo because kulolo is made from taro. But haupia. They made cakes. She was pretty good in cooking cakes, making cakes. Well, the Haoles used to like the coconut cake she made. Either they made the cakes or the cakes were bought

from Mānoa Salvation Army. What's that restaurant out there? It's on Mānoa Road [actually, O'ahu Avenue].

MK: Wai'oli.

MR: Wai'oli Tea Room. They're famous for their cakes. My mother, if they never made, if they had a big party where they needed more, my father got the cakes from Wai'oli Tea Room.

MK: So she would prepare all the foods. You mentioned something about the pineapple that she did differently from everybody else?

MR: Oh, yeah. She would cut the top off. Cut whole center of the thing of the pineapple but not bother the skin. Clean it up and wipe it off with salt. Slice it, and put it back in the pineapple and put the lid on top.

MK: So that was what we saw in the pictures, yeah?

MR: Yeah. You just lift the top of the pineapple off and you pull out the spear.

MK: And then, how about entertainment at these luaus?

MR: Oh. My dad had mostly the top-notch entertainers like Rose Tribe was a song bird with a very high soprano voice. Emma Bush was one of the best baritone singers of the women at that particular time. The Joe Kamakau Trio.

Mrs. Wong and her sister, Ka'ena. I forgot their last names but they were one of the featured dancers of the time. They used to be the hula dancers for my dad.

And for ancient hulas you have Mr.--Old Man [Antone] Ka'o'o, we used to call him. He used to live down at Squattersville where Ala Moana Center is now. All in that rock pile there. He had his own hālau where they used to teach hulas. He took care of the ōlapa side, they call it.

My mother was a pretty good hula dancer herself. Her favorite song was "Kolopā." And I always remember that song cause my mother's favorite song was "Kolopā."

MK: So your mother also entertained?

MR: Yeah, and later she taught the hula because we were getting to a time my father was getting kinda sickly and there was need for some more money for the household. So my mother starting teaching hula. Because my father became limited what he could do later. He had couple of strokes.

MK: You know like you said your mother started teaching the hula. Who did she teach to?

MR: She taught a lot of the tourists and some Navy wives. In fact, when you talk about that, that's how I got an opportunity to work at Pearl Harbor. She taught Mrs. Gillette, one of the Navy wives. Her husband was the captain of the shipyard.

So she kinda, I guess, threw a hint that I was looking for some type of work. So I guess the word got from her husband to tell my mother to have me go down for interview. So I did. I went down. I got an interview. Put in, I got classified labor. I started off as a classified labor picking up rubbish [at] Pearl Harbor [Naval] Shipyard.

MK: That was back in what, nineteen. . . .

MR: Nineteen thirty-nine. No, 1940. 'Cause I graduated '39 June, and I worked odd jobs with the Honolulu Gas Company, Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company; worked at Libby [McNeill and Libby] Cannery two-bits an hour--tray boy. Worked in the cooking department out there. That was all doing summer work, worked at the cannery.

MK: Going back to your mother and father when you were a small boy, I was wondering, your father, besides doing the luaus with his wife, was a taxi driver, tour driver. Tell me, where did he have his stand?

MR: His original stand was down on Bishop Street in the park across from the Young Hotel--now, Young Hotel. Finally, he moved out to Waikīkī and had a stand on the corner of Ka'iulani [Avenue] and Kalākaua Avenue on the ma uka side. Under there, had a big ('opiuma) tree. All he had there was a phone hung on the tree. That was his stand. Then he did all his business from there.

MK: How did he do his business as a tour driver?

MR: Well, I guess, when he started off, he used to take care of different [tourist] groups that used to come. They go back and tell their friends. When they come, they always---see, actually he didn't go looking for [clients]. These people all came by, referred to him by people that had been here.

MK: Then, where would he drive the tourists that'd come?

MR: It was an all-day affair. See, you couldn't go around Diamond Head. There was no road go around Koko Head. So you had to go over the Pali. In fact, my father told me, in the earlier days, they used to go down the Pali by horseback. There was no road, see. Went with a hack and then go down Pali. I don't know how far. I forget. I only remember him telling me that they used to have to go down the Pali on horseback. What they did on the other side, I don't know.

But then, later, he told me, when they started to drive around, he used to go to Waimānalo Plantation. Take the tourists there to see the operation. Take 'em around the island. By He'eia Kea, there was no road. They had to go close to the beach and ride the

shoulder of the beach to get around.

It was an all-day affair. He take them there and come around to Schofield, Wahiawā, Waialua. Maybe, I don't know if he did take 'em to Kahuku Plantation. Probably did. Then to the cannery--Hawaiian Pine [i.e., Hawaiian Pineapple Company] then. That was, I guess, the only one. Then, later, you had CPC [California Packing Corporation] and Libby Pine [i.e., Libby, McNeill and Libby]. But Hawaiian Pine did do the tours. Had regular tours. Then come back in town.

He always took his flask. My mother made the mixture. He call 'em "cocktail" but was 'ōkolehao with mixture of pineapple juice boiled down to a syrup. It was just like a little appetizer.

MK: So he took the tourists around the island, and . . .

MR: It was actually a whole-day affair.

MK: How often would he be doing this?

MR: Well, when he had, as the groups came or if they came with a big group probably he take 'em every day--different bunch.

MK: When you think back, what names of these tourists do you remember?

MR: Well, I have pictures showing Dolores Del Rio, Walter Chrysler Sr., photo of him with Mrs. Rose Tribe. The Spalding family which came over on their yacht. Also, the Dodge family but I can't place their picture. And the Ford family, too, the old man. I remember the Chrysler because the first time they came out with those oblong lights. I forget the name of that car. (The car's name was Hawk.) But I remember that's when I found a \$100 bill one morning, (chuckles) after the party had. . . . That was when I always go out and look for, finally found a \$100 bill on the stairway.

MK: Then, you showed me some articles about your father. You said that he always had very nice cars.

MR: Oh, yeah. He always tried to get THE best cars of the time. In fact, there's a Chrysler Imperial he had. He had a Lincoln touring car--nine passenger touring Lincoln. Big one. In fact, it was almost one of the last cars we had, we got rid of.

MK: I don't know if you can answer this but how was the money, doing this kind of business?

MR: Well, according to my mother, my father at the time was making pretty good money.

MK: When you were small, what did your father tell you about this touring business, his liking it, not liking it or . . .

MR: Well, that was his line. He really loved it. I guess he never did

try to get me involved. He figured he let me do whatever I wished. But he never at one time asked me to take over.

MK: What interest did you have in the touring business?

MR: Oh, not very much because I guess not being with him, the closest I came was when I was in the service, I played some music. I came home, I met up with Sterling Mossman. We used to play to parties, you know. But not for tourists, but private parties.

MK: I was wondering, going back to the topic of the luaus how did the neighborhood react to having these luaus?

MR: Them days, nobody squawked because, I guess, my mother always used to see if had leftover food, she shared it with the neighbors. She always tried. If we had, then the workers came first. They took home their shares. If she had some, she gave some to the next-door neighbors. There was no---well, there was a time limit. Very seldom they went over ten o'clock [p.m.] or whatever.

But most of the time, I was sent off to some other people, my mother's friend's home for the night, when they had the parties so I wouldn't bug them. But they were never called down by police. I don't think anybody ever did. Because they was one happy family, everybody was, down there.

MK: I was wondering, you had yourself and your sister Lokelani, yeah? How did your mom and your dad raise you, generally? Their style of raising the children?

MR: I was pretty well-dressed for one thing. I had knickers--woolen knickers. That was my first long pants I had was when I was in third grade. But when I was small was all. . . . You can see my old first-grade picture always saw me with a tie.

In fact going to St. Louis School, which was mentioned, was St. Louis College then, you always had to use a tie. That was a must. We were pretty well-dressed. My father kinda dressed us up pretty good.

MK: How about disciplining you folks or . . .

MR: Oh, I got my share of the hard knocks . . .

(Laughter)

MR: . . . when I did something wrong. My mother also. We did anything wrong, we were told.

MK: I know that your sister Lokelani had hula lessons at the Mossmans' [Lalani Hawaiian Village], yeah? And so, your mother, too, was into the hula . . .

MR: No, my mother learned her ancient hula, pā ipu we call it, from Mr. Ilala'ole. He has since died. He used to stay up in Kapahulu. They were good friends in the Hawaiian Society at the St. Augustine Church. So he got my mother interested in ipu work. So, my sister also learned. My mother did the pounding and my sister danced.

MK: So, in terms of your sister's training, she got it from Lalani Village and your mother?

MR: Mama, yeah. My mother, mm hmm.

MK: And how did your mother influence your life?

MR: She let me do as I wished. For one thing, I had to go to work because the means of support was kinda low. So I did go to work right out of school. I didn't have a chance to go college or whatever.

MK: Then, when you folks were small, you know, elementary school age, intermediate school age, what kinds of family activities did you, your sister, mother and father do together in Waikīkī?

MR: Oh, no, not much but see, at that time, the Japanese people in Waikīkī used to have a lot of activities, picnics, so actually the whole area got together. We always went to something. We always had picnics that we'd go to. But other than that, there was not much to do, you know.

MK: What would happen at these picnics that your folks used to go to?

MR: Well, they get. . . . You gotta chase chickens, pick up chickens, you know. The chickens, whoever pick up their chicken went home with 'em. Used to be down at Kap'iolani Park and then couple times up at the [Territorial] Fairgrounds.

MK: In those days, where were the fairgrounds?

MR: Was above the Ala Wai [Canal]. We'd go across the bridge at 'Ōhūa [Avenue] to get to the fairgrounds. That was one of the entrances to the fairgrounds in our days. I guess, for the people all live in Waikīkī can go over the bridge. That's why the reason for the building of the Ala Wai [Canal]. Because before they build the Ala Wai [Canal], every time heavy rain, Waikīkī was underwater. I guess the drainage was so bad that Waikīkī was always swamped with water after heavy rain. So that's the reason for the building for the Ala Wai [Canal], was for outlet for the waste water.

MK: So by the time you were small kid, though, Ala Wai Canal was already built?

MR: They were in the process of building it. Yeah.

MK: What do you remember about the process?

MR: The dredger going up and down. Then they pumping all the coral. That's why I say all the ma kai side of the Ala Wai was lot of coral heads because all the excessive coral that was dug from the Ala Wai was dumped over there in the empty lots.

MK: Then when you were small kid, did you folks play around there when they were dredging?

MR: No, no, we couldn't. But we used to go on the 'Ewa side of the golf [course]--which used to be the fairgrounds--across the river [i.e., canal] and go pick up plum. Used to be all rice paddies in there.

MK: And who were running the rice paddies?

MR: All old Chinese men. Chinese or Japanese. Well, I know because had the scarecrows. When we go over there, we used to pull the bells for the scarecrows. Used to scare the birds away so they don't pluck at the seeds, eh?

We went for plum, 'Frisco plum. We call it 'Frisco plum but I think was kinda bitter. But just idea go and get plum.

We were kinda, Hawaiian say kolohe type, eh? Always getting into mischief, places we not supposed to go, we went. But long as we didn't cause no friction, we never get reprimanded. We never damaged anything.

MK: So you folks used to go pick plum in the Chinese or Japanese man's paddies . . .

MR: The paddies, yeah.

MK: . . . by the Ala Wai [Canal].

MR: Then we used to play "mama pilada." We used to call 'em. In other words, I tag you and you go till we tag the last person. "Master," we call 'em.

Then we play the "steal eggs." You make two big rings. You put rocks in the center and you steal from this ring and take to your ring. But if you get touch outside there, you out until you can get all that away.

Then we used to play another one, "peewee." Cut off the broom handle make different--some long then with a T-like. Then you hit. You know, they pound. I don't know if you ever heard about the game "peewee." We used to play that.

Then we play the one, you fill up the Durham bag--you know, the tobacco [Bull] Durham bag--with sawdust. I forget the name of the game, but they go to hit you, you know. If you get hit that, you out of the game until you finally picked up--I mean run down. You know, the last person win the game. That's the kind of games we

used to play.

MK: Then where did you folks play these games?

MR: Right in our area. For "peewee" we just dig the hole in the side on the road. Small little nook.

Then play top. See who get the best top. I get lousy one. Line 'em up and then you nick 'em. You split 'em. (Laughs) Split his top. So the thing was, to get in the winning situation so you wouldn't have to sacrifice your top.

MK: Now, what other games do you remember? Beach activities?

MR: Well, beach activities was mostly surfing. Then when I was about my freshman year or something, I got involved with paddling canoe for Hui Nalu Club. Mr. John D. [Kaupiko], Sr. was the head of the club. My father being that he worked near the Moana Hotel, I got to go there and paddle canoe for Hui Nalu.

MK: Where did all the other paddlers come for Hui Nalu?

MR: Well, see, most of the guys. . . . See, at that time there was only the Hui Nalu Club, the Queen's Surf Club. I think that's about all. Then later, Queen's Surf became Waikīkī Surf. They were all quartered at the [Waikīkī] Tavern.

Hui Nalu was in the back of the Moana Hotel on the beach. See, most of the guys in the Hui Nalu were the beach attendants who took care of the beach for the tourists at Waikīkī.

The reason for, my father got me. . . . That's why I learned how to surf was through Sargent Kahanamoku. He taught me how to surf in the shallow end of the Moana Hotel. That's how I learned how to surf.

MK: How old were you when you learned to surf?

MR: About four or five. The thing was, the good part was you can ride with him and get up and stand on his shoulder. That was a big deal to climb up and stand on his shoulder while he was coming in on the wave. So I used to do that.

MK: And Sargent Kahanamoku taught you?

MR: Sargent Kahanamoku, I don't know even if he's dead or he's still living. He was one of the younger of the Kahanamoku brothers. I think that's the youngest.

MK: So people who lived Waikīkī were kinda lucky those days, yeah?

MR: Oh, yeah. What I could say is that the older boys at the beach always took care of us when we was small. Made sure that we were off the streets at eight o'clock [p.m.] or whatever and if you weren't,

you had a kick in your pants--get home. So they always try to teach us how to surf or whatever we could play in their area.

MK: Who were one of the older boys that took care of the younger guys?

MR: Joe Akana is one of them. Joe Akana. Joe Akana later took care of me when I went down to Hui Nalu. Actually, they didn't take care of us, but they were the big boys of the day--Sonny Kaeo, Lemon Holt, Old man John D. Kaupiko at the Hui Nalu, and then, oh, Charley Amalu. I don't know what happened to him. He took care of the Queen's Surf Canoe Club. We used to go down there, fool around, too.

MK: Any relation to Sammy Amalu?

MR: The father, his father. Later, he married Mrs. Shingle. That's Sammy's father. I don't know whether that's where he think that he got the ali'i blood because the Shingles was one of THE families in the Islands them days, eh?

MK: See, you just talked about ali'i blood. You know, in the old days in Waikīkī there are a lot of royalty, right? Queen Lili'uokalani, Prince Kūhiō. What kind of contacts did your father or you ever have with the ali'i?

MR: I never did but my father being that he drove, he used to drive the queen at some functions. I have pictures but I cannot recall where they were. But it shows him driving, at one particular incident, maybe the queen's funeral, driving some ali'i, the governor or whatever.

See, my father had a lot of connections with the legislators. Driver. He knew Governor [Lawrence M.] Judd. Victor Houston, which was a delegate to Congress at one time. So my father knew quite a bit.

In fact, he was quite involved in politics, too, on the Republican side. He took care driving the people--precinct work, actually.

MK: In fact, you know when you had elections, how was it in Waikīkī in the old days?

MR: Well, there used to be election meetings, I remember, at the little park next to the Moana Hotel where they get Hawaiian music, and then the different candidates got up to speak. Everybody would like to go there because we get Hawaiian music, hula dancing, which they don't have today.

In fact, election day was a big thing to just stay by one of the precincts and listen to all the muscial groups come by with each candidate. They had their own singing group. Hula dancers. They come. They do a solo or whatever at the precinct, then they move on and next was the . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 13-11-1-85; SIDE ONE

MK: So, you were just talking about the election times in Waikīkī. Who were some of the people you remember when you were a small kid that were running for office in Waikīkī?

MR: Oh, my father used to. . . . Jimmy Gilliland was running for mayor. Was it mayor or city prosecutor? Mayor was Mayor [George F.] Wright. I forget his first name. Joseph Farrington who became a delegate to Congress later. John Wilson was a mayor. Some of the [county] supervisors I could remember was John Ah Sing. Oh, I kinda forgot. That's about all I can recall right now.

MK: So those were the kinds of people that used to come to campaign?

MR: Oh, they were politicians them days. I tell you, all year they shake your hand.

(Laughter)

MR: They were really, you know, whole-year politicians. Really happy-go-lucky people to me.

MK: I'm going to change the subject now, but I know that your mother was active in St. Augustine's.

MR: Oh, yeah. She was a president of the Hawaiian Society, Altar Society, two societies they had there. Every year, she made a raffle, she calls it. Was a money-making deal for the society. Or whatever they made, they gave to the Sacred Hearts Seminary at. . . . I don't know where is, Hau'ula or the one up Kalihi.

MK: What do you remember about the priest?

MR: Oh, Father Emil? When I was small, I was altar boy then but every Friday night or whatever I forget, probably, he used to have movies for us. Father Valentine was another. One of the older. Had movies projected right on the banyan tree out in the open at night for whoever could go over there.

MK: What kinds of movies would they show?

MR: Oh, we used to like "Our Gang" comedy and da kine, you know. Well, some of them, probably, I never understand because I was so young, you know, eh? But they always did have movies.

MK: And then, you mentioned that you were an altar boy? What did an altar boy do?

MR: Well, you set up the altar--remove the covering, put up the book, the Bible, set up the chalice. Not the chalice, we never could touch the chalice, but we touched the wine bottle. Fill up the wine and water jugs for them. Then, we went along saying Latin

prayers with the priest which they finally did away with. We went to English. Now, I understand they're going back to Latin.

MK: And then, how did you get to become an altar boy?

MR: Oh, my mother. Lot of the elder folks in the district whose parents were Catholics (in the parish) were altar boys, too.

MK: And then your mother was in the Hawaiian Society and the Altar Society?

MR: Yeah, both.

MK: What did they do, those two societies?

MR: Well, the Hawaiian Society, my mother. . . . Once a month, every first Friday, I think, they have an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Hawaiian Society used to take care the twenty-four-hour watch. The men folk do the morning; or the Holy Name Society, the men folk, take care of the wee hours, and the women. . . . For twenty-four hours the thing [i.e., corpse] is exposed. They stay and watch, eh? Pray.

The Hawaiian Society was made up mostly of Hawaiian members of the parish; later they started to do started the Hawaiian singing at the masses.

MK: You were talking about the Hawaiian Society? How about the Altar Society?

MR: The Altar Society consist of all the other ethnic groups other than Hawaiians.

MK: And what did they do?

MR: Well, their purpose for I don't know, but they had their meetings and whatever. Every first Sunday, everybody got together and had mass. They had a little breakfast after, get-together.

MK: And then what were the special celebrations or events that happened at St. Augustine's that you remember, like Christmas or . . .

MR: Well, they had Christmas Eve Mass which was always packed house. We were lucky because we were altar boys, we had our place. Otherwise, there was no room available for midnight mass for Christmas.

MK: How about any special celebration for, say, maybe the saint of the church?

MR: Well, they have it whatever Sunday. It's just a Sunday but they celebrate it. Maybe they have a little breakfast or dinner or whatever.

MK: How about any special schooling, catechisms that . . .

MR: No, we didn't have because most of us went to Catholic schools, so we had our own instructions at Catholic schools. But later on, they did have kids that were going to public schools. They started at the old St. Augustine School. They have after-school instruction in religion for those.

MK: And then, I've seen old pictures of the church. Can you kind of describe what the old St. Augustine's Church looked like?

MR: Well, see, it was quite long to begin with, and very slanty roof. The sides were all latticework. There was not one window. Lot of fresh air come in. In fact, sometimes you in church you see the bird fly right through, you know.

Had a steeple out front with a belfry. Topside was an organ for the choir to sit. Back of the church was a hall that had the meetings. Later on they had a convent back there for the nuns that taught St. Augustine School--Maryknoll nuns.

They also moved later on towards Ala Wai [Canal]. The convent was on 'Ōhūa [Avenue] which was by then a through street. The convent was on 'Ōhūa [Avenue] and the school on Paoakalani [Avenue].

MK: What school did your sister go to?

MR: My sister attended St. Augustine School right across the church--the old school. Then she went to Sacred Hearts Academy.

MK: From what you heard from her, what was it like going to St. Augustine's School?

MR: Well, I guess they had fun because most of the kids, most of them knew each other, eh? They were neighborhood kids or kids that they met at church.

MK: What kinds of special events, say, like May Day or Christmas did [they celebrate]?

MR: Oh, they used to have the May Day pole dance and stuff like that. Christmas, I don't know, one of the priest used to be the Santa Claus. But I never did attend any of their functions at the school when she had [classes there].

MK: Today, I think I'm going to end over here, and then the next time I come, we're going to continue with a little bit more questions about your childhood, your schooling . . .

MR: Oh, whatever, yeah.

MK: And we're going to continue, yeah?

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 13-14-2-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mervin Richards (MR)

March 14, 1985

St. Louis Heights, O'ahu

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Mervin Richards at his home in St. Louis Heights, Honolulu, Hawai'i, on March 14, 1985. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, you know, for today the first question that I have is about what do you remember most about your young days at Kapi'olani Park?

MR: Well, we used to go there play baseball for one thing. That's about the only park we had to play, so we used to play our baseball games. Challenge between the Kuni [Fujimoto] family and the Ibaraki family, which I played for the Ibarakis.

I used to sell newspapers at the corner of Makee [Road] and Kalākaua [Avenue]. We used to do a lot of canoeing in "The Swamp." We called it "The Swamp," which is the [area] beside Makee [Road].

Across that was Daisy's. We used to go around and see Daisy which was the big elephant, which at one time, during a bad storm, went berserk and killed the park keeper, [George] Conradt.

That particular day, I was selling newspapers down at the corner there, heard all the commotion. Finally went up and stood back of the banyan tree which was about, I'd say, 150 yards from the elephant's pen, which in the meantime, they had killed and was laying on the side of the road. They had to kill the elephant in order to get to the body of the trainer. That's about all I can think about that incident.

The road now is the one that goes between the giraffes (and the bears). That used to be the old road to go to Fort Ruger. Monsarrat [Avenue] now is a new road altogether.

MK: I was told that the old KDI [Kapi'olani Drive Inn] used to be in Kapi'olani Park.

MR: Well, the first KDI [Kapi'olani Drive Inn] was where Daisy's cage was. After they got rid of Daisy, I don't know, somehow or other,

Kapi'olani Drive Inn moved in. That was the original Kapi'olani Drive Inn.

MK: And then some people have told me that in the old days, a lot of the wealthy people used to have polo games and . . .

MR: Oh, yeah. When I was small, we used to go to the polo games at--they call it Kapi'olani Park, but we used to call it "Polo Field," which was on the Diamond Head end of the park. I see matches with the O'ahu Blues which was the Dillinghams, the Maui Baldwins, I think the Rices of Kaua'i, and I believe the army had a team, too.

The stables used to be right across the street where at present the City and County have their nursery and the tennis courts. That [used] to be all polo pony stables. They walked the horses across the street to the stable.

MK: And how did you kids get to see all that?

MR: Ah, we used to sneak through the holes in the fences. (Laughs) We didn't have money to enter. And just sit on the side and watch. We retrieved the broken balls and take 'em home or the broken mallets. Then go home and play.

MK: I've been told that there were a lot of nice homes along the park. What do you remember about that?

MR: Oh, yeah. The Deerings. The only one I can remember is the Deerings which later became Chris Holmes. After that was the Queen's Surf.

But Mrs. Deering, we used to go make pin money by going up and clean her coconut trees. All the dry branches. I forget what we used to charge her, a dollar a tree or something. But we used to go clean all the leaves. We never did touch the fruit--just clean the leaves.

Then we used to make, Hawaiians call 'em nī'au brooms from the stem of the leaf, the center part [midrib]. Hawaiians used to use it as a broom to sweep down the rugs like that. We called it nī'au broom. So we used to make. And we'd sell coconut.

When the fleet come in, the sailors all come Waikīkī. We used to sell the fruit and the (chuckles) nī'au broom. Make coconut hats and sell to make a few extra pennies.

MK: Where did you folks used to sell the things, the nī'au brooms . . .

MR: Right on the Stonewall which was the name of the wall fronting Ibaraki [Store] and Aoki Store. We used to call that "Stonewall."

MK: Who used to sell?

MR: Oh, all the kids. You know, we get together and pool our money, whatever we made, eh?

MK: You know, like the beach was right there, right, in your neighborhood.

MR: Right.

MK: What kinds of things did you folks do at the beach for fun?

MR: Oh, we used to do a lot of surfing. Nighttime we used to go on the canoe. Full moon, we go hook menpachi. But I never did much diving. All of the experience I had with the divers was with the Kaeos and the DeRegos, "Steppy" DeRego. They used to go out in their rowboat and go diving offshore. Skin diving they called it--just goggles.

Certain time of the year when, I don't know if I mentioned before, about the sand erosion coming in where it left a bunker of sand out there on the reef there where we could play football or whatever. Most of it was football.

You could have an access right from the beach inside, run out on the sand all the way out to--we used to call it "Small Surf" which is now. . . . Out there they call it Queen's Surf--the big beach. But we used to call it "Small Surf." That was the area we played when the sand came in.

MK: Who used to play football with you folks?

MR: Well, the big boys and us young kids get in there to play.

MK: I know Kalihi side, they had the Thundering Herd barefoot football team. But how about your side?

MR: Well, when I was small, they had a football team which Mr. [Aloha] Kaeo would know. He was a member of that, I believe. His brother (Sonny Kaeo) used to coach. Then in later years we had the 140-pound team which was sponsored by the Honolulu Police Department and named "G-Men." We used to practice at the Washington Intermediate School. The nucleus of the team was mostly Waikīkī boys. Then they had boys from Kaka'ako, some from Kalihi, you know. But the nucleus was from Waikīkī.

MK: Who were some of the Waikīkī boys in that "G-Men" team?

MR: Myself, Adam Lum, Padeken--George Padeken, Charles Yee Hoy, but he was from Kaimukī. He became famous at 'Iolani School, so was Padeken, (at McKinley High School) as football players. I didn't play much. I played just barefoot. But in high school, I played baseball.

MK: Then now, we're talking about baseball. Tell me something about that softball group called "Nami-no-kai" that you talked about.

MR: Oh, yeah. Just to get everybody, I guess, have some kind of recreation district-wise, "Mahjong" Yoshimura formed a baseball league called "Nami-no-kai."

There was about five teams involved in there with boys from Waikīkī and other districts that always used to come surf at Waikīkī. We made about five teams. And we played at the McKinley High School field which ended up we winning the championship.

MK: About what year was that?

MR: Let's see, that was in my high school days. About the late '30s. (Nineteen thirty-six or '37.)

MK: And who are some of the guys that played from Waikīkī in the Nami-no-kai group?

MR: Oh, we had this guy, one guy by the name of Tanaka. He was a good pitcher. He was from Mānoa. "Kaiser" Joy from the famous Joy family. Padeken. Masaji Uyehara. That's the one I met. Sam Uyehara's brother. He played on the same team with me. "Mahjong."

MK: Yoshimura?

MR: Yoshimura. I don't know if the Ibaraki brothers, I believe they played, the Ibaraki brothers. Tom, Takeshi and the younger brother I call 'em "Dippy." I was trying to think of his name.

MK: Charles?

MR: Charles. Yeah. I don't know if the Aoki boys played. I think the older Aoki boy, I don't think he did. Possibly, but I cannot recall. The guys who I can recall are the guys about my age.

MK: You folks were pretty good then if you folks got the championship.

MR: Well, we had the best pitcher for one thing. This guy Tanaka was good.

MK: What other organized recreation did you folks have in Waikīkī in those days?

MR: Well, at the Hawaiian church although we didn't belong we used to go just to go there to [get] involved in volleyball and basketball--the church league. Although I never played, I went along with the guys that played at different affiliations of Kawaiaha'o Church that had the league.

MK: Quite a few activities, then yeah . . .

MR: Oh, yeah.

MK: . . . for young people? Then when you were a young kid, where did you go to school?

MR: I started down St. Louis [Elementary School] which is River Street--College Walk where the Japanese theatre [Toyo Theatre] is now. I was

there for two years--my first and second grade. My third grade we moved up to Kala'epōhaku which is now St. Louis High School, which was called St. Louis College at that time. They claimed "college" meant high school but it was "collège" they called it, not a college. But then I graduated from St. Louis [Collège].

MK: And what year was that?

MR: Nineteen thirty-nine.

MK: You know, when St. Louis [Collège] moved up to the [St. Louis] Heights, how did you go to school from Waikīkī?

MR: Oh, we used to catch the streetcar from Waikīkī, come up McCully Street, transfer and take the streetcar again up to Third Avenue where the school is. Either that or sometimes you want to save your car fare money, you walk home so you can have fifteen or twenty [cents] because was nickel a ride. If you bought the tokens, was cheaper.

MK: So if you walked home, how did you folks walk home?

MR: We walk home through Kapahulu. The lower part of Kaimukī to Kapahulu then to Waikīkī. Either that, or we cross through the [Territorial] Fairground and cross the bridge and go home.

MK: You just mentioned the fairgrounds. Where were the fairgrounds?

MR: That's where the Ala Wai Golf Course is today. Used to be what they call "country fair," where you had what you call poultry, animals, prizes you know, all that. Then you had merry-go-rounds, and what all.

MK: Then how often did the fair happen at the fairgrounds?

MR: Once a year.

MK: Just once a year. So during the rest of the year what happened to the fairgrounds?

MR: They used to have horse races in there too. But I don't know what time of year. Been so long, I forgot. That's about all I can remember during the off-season.

MK: Then, you know, I was wondering, when you were going to St. Louis High School up in the [St. Louis] Heights, who were the other guys that went with you from Waikīkī?

MR: Oh, this guy James Hoke. He was just like my big brother. He used to take care of me. See that I don't get in any trouble. There's only about two or three of us that used to come up [from Waikīkī]. Not too many guys went private school those days because, you know, those cost money. Although I paid only ninety dollars a year, high school,

[and] thirty dollars a year for grade school. At that time, ninety bucks was ninety bucks, you know what I mean? Big money. But then, my father could afford so that's how I continued there.

MK: So where did most of the Waikīkī kids your age go to school?

MR: They went to Waikīkī [Elementary] School and onto Washington Junior High, and then to McKinley [High School] which was the only high school at that time before the others came about.

Every school in the island ended up in McKinley High School, well, if they could make it. Because there was none in the country. McKinley [High School] was the only one. Then later, you had Leilehua [High School] and all these others came up.

Roosevelt [High School]. Roosevelt [High School] was an English-speaking school [i.e., English-standard school]. So was Ali'iolani [Elementary School] in Kaimukī, and Thomas Jefferson [Elementary School], like I said, down Waikīkī which came up later. We call them "English-standard" school. Lincoln [Elementary School] Downtown. So Roosevelt [High School] was just like the high school for the poor Haoles, I'd say. The rich Haoles were in Punahou [School].

(Laughter)

MK: How did you feel about your going to St. Louis [High School] when all the other kids went to other places? How did you feel?

MR: Well, I don't know, I guess, I like it. Because the guys that I started off with, of course, they from different districts, but we got together awhile. Although I missed going school with the other guys. I always met 'em when we got home. We had good times together.

MK: And how was the schooling at St. Louis [High School]? When you look back, how was it?

MR: Very strict. Very strict. You had penmanship. When they played the record was all by timing, your stroke. If you made a bad motion, you get hit on the knuckles with the ruler.

The teacher would walk down during the [penmanship lesson]. . . . Penmanship was all straight, no movement. All in your palm. Oh, not your palm, but your [wrist]. Wrist. But if you make like this [move your whole hand], I see most of them today, boy, you get cracked across the knuckles with the [ruler]. . . . Discipline was St. Louis [High School]. You never got too smart because the brothers would put you in your place.

We had one Hawaiian brother there when I was there in high school that never took no guff from nobody. His name was Brother David Paaluhi. His teenage background was Pālama. Brought up in Pālama. Then he went in the navy.

After his navy time, he got out. I understand from my mother, he got pretty sick. Then he vowed, if he ever got over the sickness, he would join some kind of religion. He joined the brotherhood--St. Mary's.

I guess he went to Dayton, [Ohio], studied and came back, and he was over here. Anybody got out of line, that's the guy they went to discipline that person. He would put you in your place. Whether you want to fight or not, he'll fight you.

'Cause everybody would know when he's getting angry when he takes his ring off his finger and removed his "top coat," we used to call 'em. 'Cause they had a half-coat, see, the brother's dress. When he took that off, remove his tie and loosen his collar, somebody going to get it. So everybody's wondering who's going to get it.

You never did try brace yourself. If you gonna to get hit, get hit. If you did brace or you duck, you get a double dose. (Laughs) So as far as discipline was concerned, the brothers had it.

MK: That brother was a real tough one.

MR: He was a tough one, man. Nobody would dare go against him.

MK: You know, at St. Louis [High School] besides the studying, did you have other types of activities that you participated in?

MR: Well, see, in them days, they never had too many clubs, eh? Not like nowadays, you know, Hi-Y [clubs] or whatever. All we did was have our intramural, you know, class versus class, play basketball, and this and that.

Then I only get involved in baseball my junior and senior year. Because there was no lower leagues. Of course, I played American Legion at Mō'ilili Field. But I never did get into high school sports as much as I did baseball.

MK: I know that when you were a small kid, you did earn some money by selling papers, and by selling those brooms and hats, and things. But I was wondering what other odd jobs did you have as a youngster . . .

MR: I worked as just like an odd-man [i.e., odd jobs man] for the South Seas Curio [Shop]--Mr. Effinger. He was like my Haole father. He used to take me as his son to the different functions of the Rotary Club like that. Dinners--turkey dinners. I was always his son because he didn't have any son. He was a bachelor. The Rotary dinners used to be Downtown on King Street. King and Bethel [Streets], upstairs, the Rotary Club.

MK: Tell me about that South Seas Curio Shop that this Mr. Effinger owned?

MR: Oh, he had a curio shop on Bishop Street in the Young Hotel Building

which was couple doors (from) King Street. And also had one in Waikīkī next to the Moana Hotel on the sea side. See, between he and the Moana Hotel was a park which was the right-of-way to the beach, which was eventually taken away. I don't know, as buildings went up, the Surfrider [Hotel] went in there and I don't know where the right-of-way to the beach is today.

MK: And then this South Seas Curio Shop, what kinds of things did they sell?

MR: All, hula skirts, you know. Different, South Sea pagodas, you know. In fact, in front of his building, the curio store had this big pagoda statue. I wish I had taken pictures. Some people probably did.

MK: And then, how did your family get to know this Mr. Effinger?

MR: Through my father. My father knew him. My father, if you look back in the album, had pictures with Mr. Effinger's two sisters when they came down. My father got to know him well.

MK: And how did you feel being able to go to the Rotary dinners?

MR: Oh, big wheel, yeah? You know, dress up and go out there. Just be called his son for the night, you know.

MK: He was a real nice man, then.

MR: Very much, he was a wonderful person.

MK: Then I know that in 1939 you graduated, yeah? And about that time, what did you want to become?

MR: Well, see, when I got out (of) school, I was pretty good with machines--commercial machines. Not too much typing but the adding machines and stuff. I mean, I liked it. I figured I could make a But at that time, the pay wasn't too shaka in town. They offered me a position to work for Hawaiian Electric for sixty dollars a month.

But that time just about when I graduated, my father was kinda getting ill. Was pretty hard for him to support us. I thought it best I go to work. So I used to work for the Honolulu Gas Company. You know, we dig ditches. Actually, it was a laborer's job, but we assisted the pipe fitter in putting in pipes, and whatever.

But it wasn't a steady job. You go down there and stood by and waited for them to call you to go to work, you know. I used to make about seventeen dollars a week. That was to help towards the family, eh?

My mother got involved in teaching hula. She used to teach lot of the tourists that come down. She had people that recommended. She used to have pretty good hula classes at home in our living room.

She taught this one lady, Mrs. Gillette, whose husband was a captain in the navy yard [i.e., Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard].

(Interview interrupted, then resumes.)

MR: My mother got some navy women for her class--navy officers' wives. I don't know how she got 'em but they're in a class she had. One of her students was a Mrs. Gillette. Her husband was a captain in the navy shipyard.

I guess, my mother asked her if it was possible for me to get some kind of work at the shipyard. So I guess, she must have went back and spoke to her husband. He, in turn, gave me a letter of recommendation to go seek some work.

I did. I went down to the Labor Board then. It used to be right out at the gate of the shipyard. Well, I just asked if there was any job available.

So, they said, "I'm sorry there's nothing." Then I showed them my letter from the captain.

The guy says, "Oh, okay. We'll take your application for classified labor. We'll see."

I got called couple days later to go down there for work. So the thing was through him that I got to start work as a classified laborer picking up rubbish in the shipyard. That was March of 1940.

MK: And then what happened to your jobs at Pearl Harbor? I know, you worked until 1979 . . .

MR: I started off as a classified labor in the Public Works Department. There were times when I was loaned out to the Transportation Department. Finally, I got transferred to them which was a different shop from Shop 70 to Shop 02 which was Transportation Department.

While working at the Transportation Department, the guy at the office found out that I had graduated from St. Louis [High School]. He asked me if I would mind coming in the office and doing his work while he go on vacation. So, I did that. I did relieve him. He went on vacation.

For quite a while, I stay there. I stay about, in fact, second time he went on vacation was in just before December 7th [1941]. And I was relieving him in the office when the war broke out, December 7th. In the meantime when the promotions come up, I tell the boss, "Eh, I'm not getting any promotion. I better go outside and work so I can get."

He says, "Oh, no. If you do a good job here, we can [offer a promotion]."

So I made "general helper," they call it, which was you supposed to help any tradesman. Then from general helper, I made fireman. I guess, they kept me. But I had to go out and learn the trade and come back. I had to know how to fire a boiler. But they kept me in the office to work, see. So I stayed there until I made operator in 1942, during the war [i.e., World War II]. From then on until I retired, I was high-crane operator.

MK: And when exactly did you retire?

MR: December '79.

MK: Long time then.

MR: About five years now.

MK: When World War II came, December 7th, [1941], what were you doing?

MR: Well, see, them days, yeah, I was working Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard]. On the weekends, there was no work in the shipyard. They only work forty hours a week. We used to go body surfing down at Makapu'u Point. Makapu'u Point or Sandy Beach. Some classmates of mine that I went to St. Louis [High School] with, we used to go down there. By the name of Johnny Kellet, Wong Leong, Sammy Reeves.

Well, we were supposed to go body surf that morning, December 7th. When I got up, my friend Kellet call up. He lives up Kaimuki. He calls up.

He say, "Eh, we cannot go body surf this morning. Pearl Harbor bombed."

I said, "Nah, don't fool me. I don't know nothing."

He says, "Well, you turn on the radio and listen."

So when I did turn on the radio, it was true that Pearl Harbor was bombed. They were calling all Pearl Harbor workers to return to the shipyard to work. So we did.

He came down. He brought his car. He left his car at my home, down Waikiki. We went on my car. I had a 1931 Model-A with a rumble seat convertible. Well, I had that. So we went--all the way down. See, the only way we can get out to that part was King Street. There was no Ala Moana [Boulevard]. Only King Street. So every police officer we passed just kept giving us the high sign to keep going. We didn't actually make no stop all the way.

When I got to Pearl Harbor, I had to park my car outside the shipyard. They didn't allow anybody to go into the shipyard with your car although we had decals. But every car was kept outside the gate. We went in by truck. Trucks kept coming in and out. That was our transportation to get to whatever shop we worked. Well, I stayed there.

When I got to shipyard, an explosion just happened on Drydock 1 where the (destroyers Cassio and Downs) had blown up. And the (USS) Pennsylvania was in the back of 'em. That's the only drydock we had. So they asked us if we want to try assist the fire fighting.

Well, then our boss came call us. Asked us if we could drive any type of car, we can drive truck, to get injured from the waters they had picked up from the bay, take 'em down to hospital point, which is down towards the Waipi'o side of the shipyard which was the naval hospital there. So we did that for a while.

Then afterwards, they told us, "You go stay in the shop and help out." You know, help the guys in the shop get the cranes and whatever, ready to go work. So that night, we stayed until almost five o'clock. So, they told us, "Go home. Come back tomorrow morning."

Coming out, now, I gotta go look for my car outside there. The guys had pushed 'em more in the bushes. I found it, though. But the top had ripped from the kiawe trees that they had pushed it [into]. Lot of kiawe trees them days in front of where Bloch Arena and stuff is now today. Be all kiawe trees. I found my car. I came home.

Some guys bum ride with me come home from there. But I told 'em, "The farthest I gonna go is Waikīkī." I know there was two guys live up Kaimukī. "You guys gotta walk the rest."

When we came home, already getting kinda dark. They don't allow no lights. You couldn't put on your headlights. Now, I'm driving on King Street. The guys watching the side of the road and guiding me so we can get home.

We were stopped by the Advertiser Square. The police officer who stopped me, I happened to know him. Because I used to go around with Sterling Mossman who was a police officer. This guy was Buddy Scott. By the way, my nickname was "Buckwheat."

He says, "Eh, 'Buckwheat,' you guys cannot go."

I say, "Why?"

He says, "You cannot use lights! You turn on your lights the HTG [Hawai'i Territorial Guard] patrol going shoot your headlights!"

I say, "But I gotta get home. I just pau work!"

He say, "Okay."

There used to be one dormitory over there for Kamehameha School girls. [They] used to stay over there. I don't know, it's right where the Mission House is now. On the Waikīkī side, used to be one dormitory. The Kamehameha girls used to stay over there. I think before they moved, that was their domitory.

We went in there, asked them if they get any kind of blue material. Either she gave me one sweat shirt or something. I broke 'em up, and put 'em over my headlights so can drive.

He say, "Okay. I let you go but anybody stop you after this, you on your own."

So we drove. We drove, we drove, we drove. All blackout already. No lights. I turn on the headlights to look. Then I got by the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel]. This guy pull me on the side. "Turn off your lights otherwise we shoot your car."

I say, "Well, shee, I only got about a couple more blocks, I'm home. Furthermore, I gotta go work tomorrow morning."

He say, "Okay. Okay. You take it easy. But anybody, you know."

I say, "All these guys in this car, there's five of us, all work Pearl Harbor. We just got home late. We get caught in the blackout coming home."

So, we got home. I got home, my mother over there. We trying to. . . . In the meantime, we had blue paint. We paint our flashlight blue because that's the only lights we can use. (Laughs) Imagine trying to bathe with a blue flashlight and eating, you know.

But that was initial of December. From December 7th, the day.

MK: Since you were working Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard] during the war, how was your workload affected during the war years?

MR: Oh, it was very heavy during the war years. In fact, during World War II was heavy. Then it slacked off in about 1948, or '49. We had a big RIF [reduction in force]. Then what saved the guys from getting out was the Korean War came up. Then they all rehired again.

MK: So you were busy then, wartime, yeah? And then, during World War II, how was life in your neighborhood affected? You had blackouts. What else happened because of the war in your neighborhood?

MR: Well, not too much. I mean, it was just ordinary things that happen during the day. Because I didn't know, I wasn't home. I was at work. In the evening, you couldn't go out because had blackout. And the blackout was ten o'clock. Then later, the curfew was six o'clock at the beginning. Then they moved it up to ten o'clock. So there wasn't much. Nothing much you could do.

MK: How about rationing? How did that affect your family?

MR: Oh, there was gasoline rationing. But I forgot the amount I used to get. I used to get thirty-five or forty gallons a month for my car. There was ration given me to get to and from work. Being that I had

a Model-A, which was only a four-cylinder, was very cheap, cheap running car.

MK: I know in some areas, they used to have ward captains, you know, who would . . .

MR: Oh, yeah, district captains. Yeah, yeah. Well, I didn't get to know anybody now. Because as I said, when I came home from work, I was tired.

MK: And you know, like Waikīkī already had some tourists before the war. When war came, what happened to the tourist trade? Did you notice? What did you notice?

MR: Well, you see, all the [military] service took over the hotels. I don't know what happened to the tourists. See, the navy took over. . . . Was it the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel]? The submariners took over the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Then the navy or the army took over Queen's Surf. There was another one, the Breakers down in Waikīkī, for the EM [i.e., Enlisted Men's] Club. They built Maluhia which is still there today down at Fort DeRussy. All EM [Enlisted Men's] Clubs, see.

So, I don't know what happened to all the tourists. Maybe they couldn't travel because them days, everything was by boat. And the reason for, I think, the boats not coming in was because of the danger involved in being torpedoed.

In fact, the Thursday before December 7th the Lurline had left. Lurline or the Malolo had left Honolulu for the Mainland. Everybody thought she was sunk. They thought [that] until they got word that she arrived safely on the Mainland. The Malolo left with a lot of passengers, you know.

I think that's the only one that I can recall. Lot of tourists went, you know. But coming back, I don't think---they stopped altogether, the water transportation because it was dangerous.

MK: You know, I've heard that on like the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] side where they had the beaches, there were barbed wire to keep people off the beaches. How about your side?

MR: They had barbed wire, too, on the beaches. But actually, when I think, was not for the people; it was for in case of invasion, I guess. They had barbed wire strung in the water.

MK: Yeah, at that time, how did you and your family feel because it was wartime?

MR: Well, was hard because the rationing of food. Just like we get second-class food. I mean, the meats, my mother them lucky they learned from their mother. That's when I found out that they used the papaya to soften [meat]--tenderizer.

Then the Haoles came. They made tenderizer out of papaya leaf, eh? But the Hawaiians used to use the papaya leaf to tenderize whatever meat wasn't too soft, you know?

See, we work in Pearl Harbor, I was able to buy from the commissary. We had privileges to buy. So I used to buy whatever my mother wanted to, which was maybe five dollars a bag. Come home with fifteen dollars bag, that's plenty food. Five dollars, one big bag which, today, maybe thirty-five dollars, one. (Chuckles) We used to have that privilege. Then later on, it was taken away because some people, instead of buying for them own selves, buying for everybody else. So we lost that privilege.

MK: With all the soldiers around in the Waikīkī area, I was wondering about places like bars and clubs. What was there?

MR: Well, I understand when I was small, see, there's Fort Ruger and Fort DeRussy. There used to be lot of ill feelings between the soldiers and the beach boys. I don't know why. But maybe, as I said, the Massie case didn't help, there was little . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: You were saying that there was a little bit of racial prejudice.

MR: Yeah, I guess. I don't know why. But they always had skirmishes between the soldiers and the beach boys. In fact, one time they made us--nobody can go out at night because you don't know what's gonna happen when they meet. They blame these soldiers and the beach boys get together. They have a skirmish.

So I understand there was also in Kalihi, same thing with Fort Shafter and the Kalihi groups. So I don't know what came about to having those dissensions between the two.

MK: And that was during World War II?

MR: Prior to that, when I was. . . . Before the war this happened.

MK: So, in terms of life during World War II in Waikīkī, what unusual things can you remember about that period, if any?

MR: I remember one time, I don't know if I mentioned, we had been surfing and somebody said, "A whale is caught on the reef. It's stuck on the reef. Right in front of the beach there."

When we got to see it, my uncle Mr. Padeken had put a lasso on the tail of the whale. I don't know how he did it. Everybody started to heave-ho the whale and pull it in towards shore. We got it to shore,

but it was all cut up by the coral.

Something like that Daisy, when that thing was there, everybody start taking souvenirs. The carcass was all cut up. Just like the Daisy, same thing. People start cutting when the thing was down. Cutting away different parts of the carcass for souvenirs. I don't know why they act that way.

MK: Okay. Right now I'm going to change the topic. In 1951, August 18 you got married. Who did you get married to?

MR: I married a nurse. She had come over with her friend for supposedly two years. See, I was playing music. It was down Cafe Maxinne that I met her, which used to be on Merchant Street. King and Merchant [Streets]. The entrance used to be on King Street, the exit on Merchant Street. But they used to call it the Rathskeller bar.

I was playing music with Mickey Fo and "Papa." I forget what his name was--three of us. See, I played a little music when I was in the army. So when I came out, I used to play at Mickey Fo's mother's luaus. They were the people that used to give luaus up at Kaimukī on Seventh Avenue for the service people. So she asked me if I wouldn't mind go play music with her.

So I started playing at this bar, the Rathskeller at Cafe Maxinne, and then I met my wife. They had come down with the nurses from Kauikeaouli Children Hospital which was across from Kuakini's. [It is now the] rehab center [Rehabilitation Center of the Pacific]. Then we started to date. In 1951, she and I got married.

MK: And what was her name?

MR: Mildred Stollings.

MK: How many children have you and your wife had?

MR: We have five--two boys, three girls.

MK: And where did your children get their education?

MR: Oh, they all were lucky. They all started at St. Augustine [Elementary School] in Waikīkī, with the exception of my. . . . Well, everyone graduated St. Augustine [Elementary School] except my last girl. When I moved to Kaimukī, she was fourth grade. She entered the fifth grade, St. Patrick's [Elementary School]. Actually, they all went to Catholic school. My oldest boy went to Maryknoll [High School]. My oldest girl went to St. Francis Convent. My younger boy went to Damien High School. My second daughter, Kamehameha [Schools], and my last daughter Kamehameha [Schools].

MK: And then you mentioned the children went to St. Augustine's school. Where was that located then?

MR: Yes. That school was located at the Ala Wai end (of Paoakalani Avenue). It was relocated from about the medium part of 'Ōhūa [Avenue] across the church to Ala Wai. They all graduated from there. That school was run by the church and the Maryknoll nuns.

Of course, my last daughter and my second to the last--my two younger daughters--the school was still run by the church but the lay teachers started. See, there wasn't enough nuns. The nuns were dwindling, and lay teachers started to come in.

MK: What was it like raising your children up in Waikīkī?

MR: Well, see, my wife and I kept working. My mother babysat my first four children. My last one was taken care of by the babysitter that lived near our house. Everything was "Grandma," you know. I was busy trying to make ends meet. You know what I mean.

MK: You were telling me about all the small kid stuff you used to do. How about your kids? What kind of things did they do when they were growing up in that Waikīkī area?

MR: Well, see the thing, I got involved with the Y [YMCA], because I wanted them to learn how to swim. That's one thing I can say. Every one of them know how to swim. So, being that we used to go down to the Y [YMCA]. Keo Nakama had been there. He was the instructor of the swim team, so my older boy swam and my oldest girl swam for the Swim Club. But the others, I didn't teach them how to swim. They learn their swimming down at the Central Y [YMCA] which is down across from Ala Moana Center now.

MK: And being that they were living so close to the beach, what kinds of beach activities . . .

MR: They used to go down to the beach, you know. But then as I said, the beach wasn't like it was before. They started to cut away the coral. It became dangerous to let the children go down there, because they would wade out so far, and then they go under. Nobody would know.

After they start cutting up the coral on the inside, the sand came in. It was very dangerous for swimming. But most of them never did surf like I did.

MK: I know that, you know, like a lot of the stores that you went to like Aoki Store, they had to move in 1968 to Aoki . . .

MR: The new one.

MK: . . . Mini-Mart. Up till that time, where did your kids go if they wanted to go get candy or Popsicles . . .

MR: Well, the first one was Ibaraki [Store]. If you can't get anything at Ibaraki [Store], then you go Aoki [Store], which was the bigger

store. They had more variety or whatever. But the first store was Ibaraki [Store]. In fact, we had a charge account with Ibaraki for whatever groceries, paid by monthly.

MK: So your kids could go and charge if they want to?

MR: Well, let us know what they going [buy]--not any kind. I mean, mostly for the household.

MK: How about Tahara's Unique Cafe?

MR: Ah, later, they used to go. They used to go there. But it was run by one of the daughters of the original owner, which had in turn moved. It was in the new block already, all different. Everything was different.

They was in the center towards--well, I'd say, if you look at the old map where the river [i.e., Hamohamo Stream] was formerly, it would be on the Diamond Head side. The father had his place on the 'Ewa side of the river--the original Unique [Cafe].

MK: So it changed?

MR: All the frontage changed.

MK: What else changed in that frontage area of the stores?

MR: Well, you had this. . . . That name of that restaurant? Blue . . .

MK: Blue Ocean?

MR: Blue Ocean! See, that was an old one then they made a renovation which was right next to the river. That's the Blue Ocean. But used to be a driveway go down to.

MK: So had those two changes? Blue Ocean and . . .

MR: Blue Ocean and knickknack store. What the hell they call it now? Drugstore.

MK: I've heard of a Russell's.

MR: Yeah, well, the Russell's Drugs was run by . . .

MK: The Unique Cafe's . . .

MR: The daughter.

MK: Daughter. Lillian?

MR: Lillian. She is the one that end up running the Unique [Cafe] after she gave up her sundries. Russell's Sundries, that was the name of the place.

MK: By that time in the '50s, how had the neighborhood changed?

MR: Oh, lots. Apartments start going up. When did I leave there?

MK: You left, '73.

MR: Seventy-three, I left there. I left there. They already had the Scandia . . .

MK: Scandia [Condominium]?

MR: Scandia. That's where the Akaka family was. That run by the Ornelles.

The other end, they had, where the Jackson went in with the Ornelles. They built another big one there. Oh, that tower down there. You can see it from here. It's right next to the church. That tower, the big, that one went up.

The old church was still there when they had that. They built the church before they made the new church. That tower there. Then, Holiday Inn and all those.

MK: So by '73 when you moved, all these apartments and condos had come in.

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: I know that you left Waikīkī in 1973, right? Why did you make that decision?

MR: Well, the reason for it was, I had a home there. Taxes were high, for one thing. If you did any renovations, you had to do it by the construction code or whatever they call it. It had to be fireproof, so actually the old home would have to be all broken down and built hollow-tile or whatever.

There was a height limit you could go. Because the land area, you only could go three stories. So there was no use of trying to build an apartment. I had a pretty good-sized family.

One of the, I think, Waikīkī realtors came around and asked if we would be interested in selling our property.

I said, "Yeah, if everybody came in, you know." They were trying to get four lots which [was] mine; and Yamashiges; in the back where the Kaeos used to stay, I don't know, some Japanese people finally ended up [occupying it]; and the Laus. Some other Chinese people owned it later. But this Pākē wanted too much money--too much over here. So, it was kinda skimp. We didn't know whether the deal would go through. It finally did. So I sold that property, so did the Yamashiges. Because one reason for it, was because the road gonna come through now, Kūhiō Avenue. Now, they want twenty-five

feet of your property for frontage for the widening of the road which they did today. It's beautiful. So that would cut me to about 4100 feet. That's quite a bit. Now, I cannot do nothing. I'm sunk. I cannot build, so Yamashiges and I had to give up that. The back side, they didn't give up. They still had their property 50 by 100 [feet] but we were cut short. So whatever I got for it helped me to get my new home in Kaimukī.

MK: How did you feel about having to make that decision to leave?

MR: Waikīkī wasn't no place to stay anymore. Because I remember when I was small, you never did lock the front door. Everybody was welcome. But it got so that you couldn't trust. In fact, one night there, my wife and I sleeping, some guy's trying to come through the window. You weren't safe in Waikīkī, too.

I didn't want to see my kids come up with that. If we can get away, they were getting old. If I had a chance to get away, I'll get away. Always, everybody says, "Eh, why you give up your property? You know, gold mine!"

I say, "Yeah, but do you know the position I'm in? I get a lot of kids coming up. I cannot hold onto the property. Where we gonna stay?" I gotta go out and pay rent.

The State going pay you, but it ain't going pay you what these guys offer you [for the property]. They [i.e., government] going just condemn that property for their own which we already knew was twenty-five feet from our boundary in. So that left me only a small portion. So I got pretty good [by selling it]. I got my home. I'm happy today.

MK: As you look back, what's the biggest difference between this St. Louis Heights neighborhood and your old Waikīkī neighborhood? What's the biggest difference?

MR: Well, I don't think much, because we have good neighbors where we at now. Both on the side. And look like up there, everybody's trying to watch out for each other. Down Waikīkī, at the time, the people were changing. Sometimes you didn't know your. . . . Across the street had apartment. You don't know who's staying in there. Whether they were trustworthy or not.

Me up here, I trust my neighbors. But as I say, when I was small when we had mostly Hawaiians [and] the old-time Japanese, you knew who was who and you trusted everybody, you know. Looking down from here to Waikīkī, "the Jungle," when I first moved up here wasn't too bad. Now, you can't even see the beach.

Before, I could see little of the water, the breakers of the ocean. Now, where I'm at, can't see nothing unless you go way up higher. All that jungle came up after.

- MK: And what ties with Waikīkī do you still have today? For instance, attending St. Augustine's Church or something?
- MR: That's, sometimes I go but ever since I move up here, we've been going to St. Patrick's. But once in a while, I go to St. Augustine.
- MK: Now, I was wondering, as you look back, what's been the biggest change in Waikīkī during your lifetime?
- MR: Well, Kalākaua Avenue (chuckles) is a busy situation now. You see, all those little shops they didn't have before. I don't know what you call it. They should do away with lot of that stuff. Those small little nooks right on the street there bothering the tourists mostly.

Maybe, as I say, if they clean up that area and everybody concentrate on the tourist industry, maybe we'd have better, you know. That's what I understand now, even the hookers are right on Kūhiō Avenue in the wee hours of the morning, what have you. They picking up tourists and robbing them, whatever. That never happened before. It's really bad for the tourist industry right now--that kind of people in the area.

- MK: You know, in the old days, how often would you see a tourist come on to your side of Waikīkī?
- MR: Only when my father brought. They would come from the hotels 'cause as I said, all these contacts I would have would be when my father brought people to the house. 'Cause whatever he entertained was at the hotel or took them around the island, tours and back to the hotels. Then to luaus or whatever.
- MK: For last section of our interviewing, I wanted to ask you some questions about the other part of Waikīkī. You know, what you remember about the Waikīkī outside of the place that you lived.

The first time I came here, you drew this map where you see some of the buildings and things that you remember, yeah? I was wondering, when you go beyond Paoakalani Street towards 'Ewa you get into the 'Āinahau, Moana Hotel area. Tell me about that area during your childhood time.

- MR: Well, we used to go down that area. Mostly was for pick dates or mangos 'cause nearly every yard had a mango tree. And we go down there and just ask. Most of the people were very. . . . You know, they said, "Just help yourself and make sure clean up the rubbish." Of course, some of the guys (chuckles) were sloppy, too.

We used to go down and just go in the back, where they call the Banyan Tree Inn or Restaurant today. That's where the families of the guys working at the hotel used to stay. They call 'em "Japanese Camp" because mostly was Japanese, old Japanese families whoever. We call 'em the camp. They stayed there, brought up their children.

I think that portion is owned by the Queen Emma--no I mean, Queen's Hospital, that land now.

MK: And on this map you had something about Grayline's garage on that same side of the street.

MR: Oh, these guys were the tour company, just like. They handle a lot of taxis for the hotels. My father was independent. These guys were regular. They were run by the hotel--this taxi.

MK: What hotel ran the Grayline?

MR: Moana Hotel and the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel].

MK: And then, let's see. As you cross the street, you have the Moana Hotel, the empty lot and then . . .

MR: Outrigger dance hall. Outrigger Club was on the beach side. In the front fronting Kalākaua was this dance hall. Was just every Saturday night get dance. Some like had dances there, down the Armory at the Palace, Pālama Gym. That was the dances, weekends.

MK: About when did the dance halls exist?

MR: Shee, I think nineteen. . . . When we had a big earthquake? Nineteen thirty-six, I think. I remember 'cause I was in the show house at Waikīkī Theatre, came out, and then we went and stood in front of the dance floor. And could see all the windows rattling on top. I guess the aftershocks, you know, in the Moana Hotel was just like somebody rattling the windows. Everybody running out in the streets.

MK: And you were telling me, people went to church the next day?

MR: Oh, church was loaded next day.

(Laughter)

MK: And then you go down this way. You mentioned Waikīkī Theatre. What was it like going to Waikīkī Theatre back then during the war?

MR: Oh, big deal. That was THE theatre, eh? So beautiful inside, you know. You sit down, you look up at the ceiling just like clouds floating and had imitation coconut trees and plants on the side. Beautiful, sitting in the theatre. And they had the usherettes. Girls about my age now. They were usherettes. Sortell used to be the organist. Edwin Sortell. Every Christmas they have the girls sing Christmas carols with him on the organ.

MK: In that area, you have hotels like Moana Hotel, Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Tourists used to go there. Then later servicemen, right? During the war? But how about local people like you folks that lived in Waikīkī?

MR: I don't think so. Not that I know of, anybody going into the hotels.

MK: So you only saw the outsides then of the hotels. As you go more towards the 'Ewa side of Waikīkī, what other places do you remember best about Waikīkī before the war [World War II]?

MR: Well, not too much before, but after the war. During the war, was that Dragon's Den. Used to be a bottle club. Wishing Well, that's another bottle club during the war, which was located. . . . Dragon's Den was located on Kalākaua Avenue right across from the Blue Bird Cafe, which is now Aoki Mini-Mart.

You had the Dragon's Den, the Palm Tree [Inn], Barbecue [Inn]. Barbecue Inn, we just call it. And then Sam Uyehara's Smile Cafe. Then the Waikīkī Park [i.e., Aloha Park], which was back of the cafe going towards the ocean side. There's Rendezvous Dance Floor. Later became the. . . . I forgot the name now.

MK: Not the Master Lamp Pole?

MR: Lamp Pole. Then it burnt down and that was it, was all pau. And then, there used to be the Good Earth which was on John 'Ena Road. The Wishing Well was across the street on Kalākaua [Avenue] towards McCully [Street].

The [Aloha] Park, for one thing, because all this happened, when I was small, we used to go down there ride merry-go-round, [and] the "Dipper" [a roller coaster]. They had the Dipper. Then later became the Lamp Pole, Rendezvous for dancing.

MK: And how was it going to that amusement park?

MR: Yeah, I was scared because first time I ever rode the Dipper. Very scary. But the merry-go-round and stuff like that.

MK: How much did it cost to go ride the Dipper in those days?

MR: Shee, I forget what the price. Was very cheap because everything was very cheap in them days. Maybe five, ten cents, I don't know. 'Cause we used to buy crack seed. Five cents one package crack seed. Manapua [mea'ono-pua'a] like that. All cheap! We buy one package of the noodle, what you call 'em, chow fun--five cents. So I guess everything was cheap for us children to go in there.

MK: You know, early you mentioned bottle clubs. What are bottle clubs?

MR: Well, that was during the war. You went to these clubs after hours and took your own bottle to drink. I don't know. They had that. There was another bottle club that was on--they had call 'em Healani Club was on Kapi'olani Boulevard where, I think, around by the KGMB around there. In back there, used to be all swamp area. In back KGMB, which is now Kaheka Lane and all that behind there. Used to be swamps in there.

MK: So bottle clubs were all over Waikīkī then?

MR: Quite a few, yeah.

MK: And then going back a little bit more . . .

MR: In fact, going back to Waikīkī again, just when the war started Kalima Brothers became famous. They used to live on Kāneloa Road, so in the evening they take their instruments down to the beach.

There's a banyan tree which is still there by the Kūhiō Beach. They used to play music over there. "Kaiser" Joy used to put a bucket in the front and people used to throw money in there. Money for them play music.

The Kalima Brothers--original Kalima Brothers--which was Junior, Jesse Kalima. Albert, Jesse, Junior. . . . There's another brother, and one still play. He wasn't member of the family. They were the originals. Then later on, Richard Kauai was started with the Kalimas. Then he broke away. He got his own group.

MK: So, you had, sometimes, street entertainment.

MR: Yeah, these guys. In fact, when I was small, they claim the Stonewall, the original Stonewall music boys used to play music every night on the Stonewall there. But we couldn't go down at night. As I said, eight o'clock, you off the streets and home.

Small kids cannot go down unless you snuck away, but if the big boys caught you they get you off the street and home. Couldn't go fool around. Like today, nobody cares for the kids. I mean, them days, the bigger guys used to see that we never got into trouble. Keep us out of trouble.

MK: Let's see. I have one more question for you. You know, you mentioned Crack Seed Lane. What can you tell me about that Crack Seed Lane in the Kālia area?

MR: Well, I know the Harbottles and some of the Paoas, Melvin, but we used to go down there to go in the back to watch music before I got involved with that teahouse which is Seaside Garden.

There was one police officer, he just died recently. I can't think of. . . . He used to live right close to the beach. He used to have parties. We used to go to his home for parties. He used to entertain a lot of women marines, you know.

Some of his friends that knew the girls used to come over there for parties. So we used to go down there and kinda play music like, you know. And that's why I remember they calling it "Crack Seed Lane."

MK: So about what time period did you folks call that area "Crack Seed

Lane"? Where the Paoas lived?

MR: Oh, just before the war, I think. Or during the war because I knew the Thompsons. Myron Thompson, who is a big wheel with the Bishop Estate now, we used to be chummy with him and his brother. The mother is a Harbottle. That's how we get to go into the houses over there, the families. The mother is a Harbottle girl. Thompson is the husband's name. The sons Myron Thompson, Henry Thompson. He's [i.e., Henry Thompson] with the State Health Department.

MK: Okay, now I know where "Crack Seed Lane" is.

MR: See, most of the Paoas family, some of them used to stay in that lane. The Harbottles had a home fronting Ala Moana Road, used to be, eh, before. Ala Moana Road. Paoa family. Kahanamoku. Duke's corner house where the Shell, not the Shell, but that big entertainment place built right on the corner.

MK: Hilton Hawaiian?

MR: Yeah, what they call that? That's not the Shell. That auditorium . . .

MK: The Dome.

MR: The Dome, yeah.

MK: Hilton Hawaiian Dome. You know, I was wondering as a kid, since you're down by the Diamond Head end, Kālia is on the 'Ewa, how much contact did you have with people in the Kālia area?

MR: Well, the reason why we went into Kālia, one of my mother's friends had a home down there when I was small. Her name was Mrs. Jarrett. Just like when my mother had parties, they didn't want me around at home, I was shipped out to . . .

(Laughter)

MR: . . . the babysitter like. That's how I got to know some of the people down in Kālia area. And this home was right close to the Ala Wai. Was all dirt road them days. No more. . . . That Chinese store you mentioned about, we call 'em the "Pākē store," the red store. That's still there today but it used to be. . . .

MK: The Kam Look Store?

MR: Kam Look Store. Then later on when I was in school, right across the street from Kam Look Store, I used to go to my coach's home. Charley "Fat" Fernandez. He had a house right there. I don't know who own the place. He used to stay there. He used to coach me in baseball at St. Louis [High School].

MK: So you knew a little bit about Kālia then?

MR: Oh, yeah! A little.

MK: So I think I'm going to end the interview over here. I think our office learned a lot about Waikīkī and how at least your family lived in the Waikīkī area.

MR: Yeah, really happy to be of any assistance. Like I say, I think this person I told you today, Aloha Kaeo, would be little more earlier time than I. 'Cause he should be in his early '70s or maybe the same age as Joe Akana probably.

MK: Okay, we'll go try then.

MR: Yeah. So he just retired as I say as a lifeguard. And as I said, he would know about the Kanekoa family 'cause he used to go fishing with this Kanekoa. And there's another, Kanekoa's brother, King. He used to stay with the Kanekoas on the corner, see.

MK: Okay. So Kaeos and they know the Kanekoas.

MR: Kaeos used to stay in the back of us on Kāneloa. As I said, was all Hawaiians before, bumbai these Japanese families. I guess gotta sell out before. I guess they cannot pay, eh?

END OF INTERVIEW

WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES

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